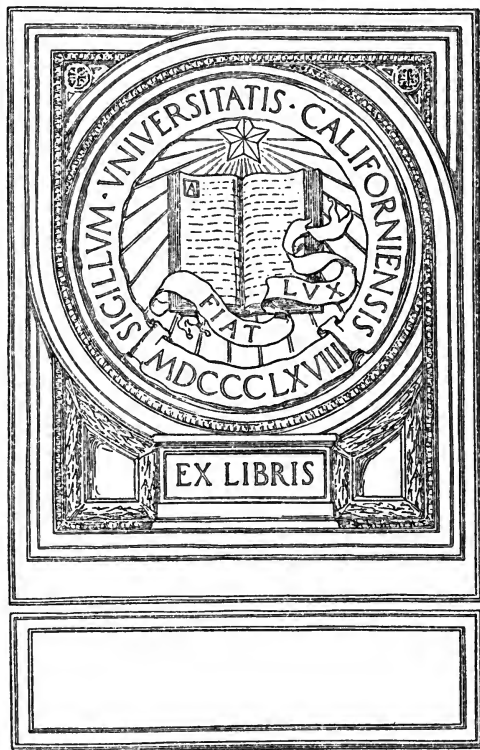
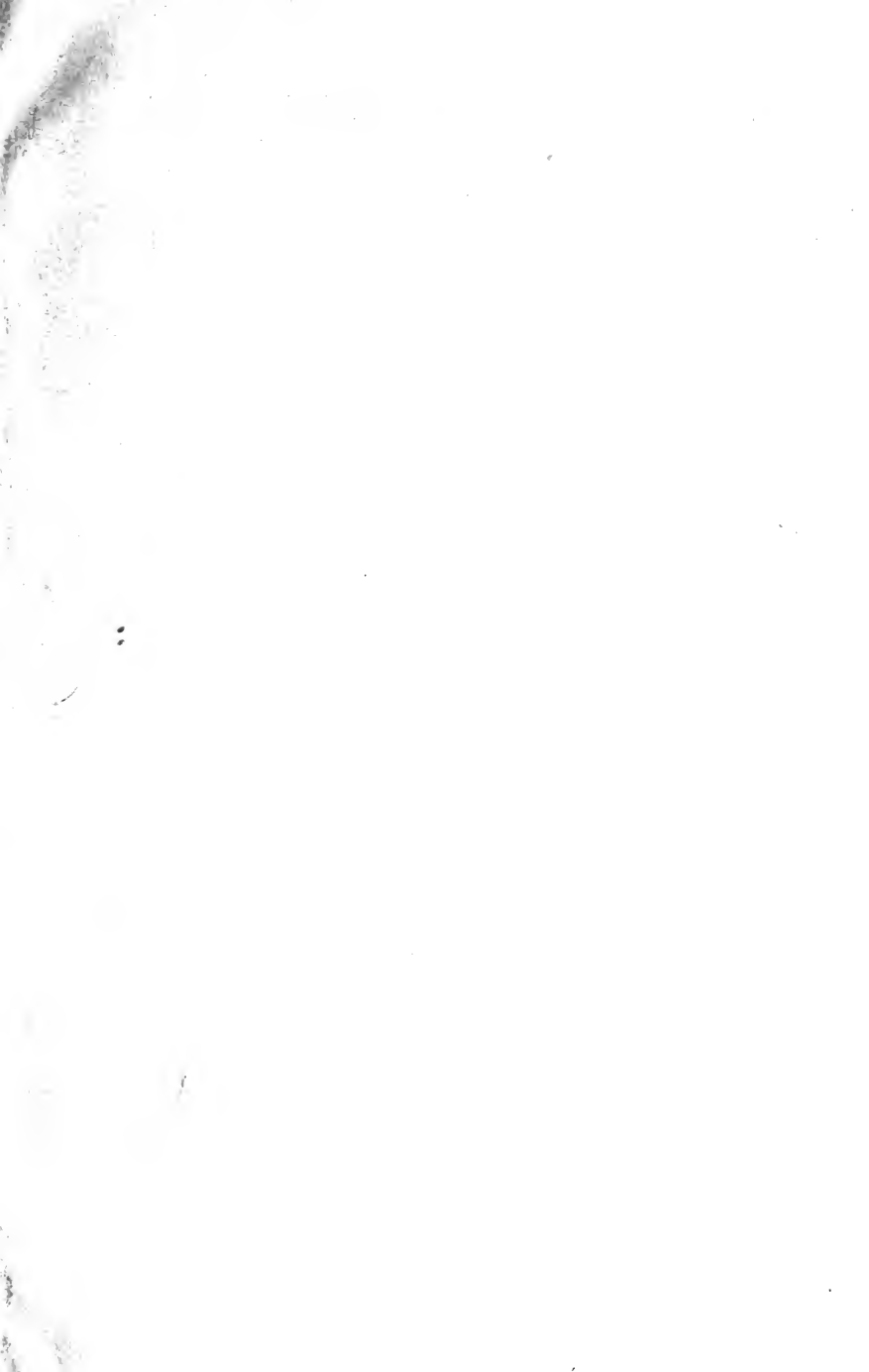


**THE OLD TESTAMENT
BIBLE STORIES
FOR THE YOUNG**

BY WALTER L. SHELDON

GIFT OF
Mrs. Gladys Isaacson





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The Old Testament Bible Stories For the Young

FOR USE IN THE HOME AND SCHOOL

By WALTER L. SHELDON

Lecturer of the Ethical Society
of St. Louis. ∴ ∴ ∴ ∴

Some Words of Cordial Endorsement.

"I have read Mr. Sheldon's Old Testament Bible Stories with profound interest. They will be of great service to many a teacher, as well as to many a child. Written from the standpoint of modern exegesis, yet in simplest language and with a manifest purpose everywhere to bring out the moral significance and the lessons for life that may be drawn from these Stories, the work meets a real want."

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Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

"I doubt if anything better has ever been done to bring the real value of the Old Testament home to the minds of children. Certainly I know nothing else that begins to be as good. I wish that I could put one of these volumes into every family in my congregation."

REV. WASHINGTON GLADDEN.

Congregational Church, Columbus, Ohio.

"I have read parts of the work to my children and other parts to myself, and they stand both tests admirably. They are interesting and profitable. I am glad to see that you have not felt it necessary to spoil a good story by critical interpretation. This, I think, is the right way to deal with these ancient and beautiful narratives."

REV. GEORGE HODGES.

Dean of the Episcopal Theological Seminary, Cambridge, Mass.

"I most heartily commend your painstaking effort and wish for your work the wide circulation I am sure it deserves."

REV. JAMES W. LEE.

St. John's Methodist Episcopal Church, St. Louis, Mo.

"Your stories are first of all interesting; and, best of all, carry their moral in their warp and woof. The very best of your book is its "Suggestions to Teachers," which I wish might be read by every Sunday-school teacher in the land."

REV. A. F. EASTMAN.

Congregational Church, Elmira, N. Y.

"It seems to me that your book will reach a wide public. People of all creeds are anxious to find some way of teaching the elements of righteousness. You have adapted the Bible Stories most admirably to this purpose. I should be glad to have my words of appreciation used in any way that might bring the book to the attention of those who are struggling with the Sunday-school problem." REV. S. M. CROTHERS.

First Church of Cambridge, Mass.

"It seems to me that you have succeeded in making the Bible Stories real and living for children, and that you have drawn out clearly the important ethical teaching of each story. I like especially the idea of the "Memory Verses" with which the stories are supplemented."

REV. JULIUS W. ATWOOD.

Trinity Episcopal Church, Columbus, Ohio.

"Your volume of Old Testament Bible Stories is a splendid addition to religious and ethical literature. I have never met with any work that brings out the ethical value of these stories so clearly. The language is so simple and the moral is so plain that the work can only prove serviceable and helpful to all interested in using the Bible as a text-book of moral and religious instruction."

RABBI J. LEONARD LEVY, D.D.

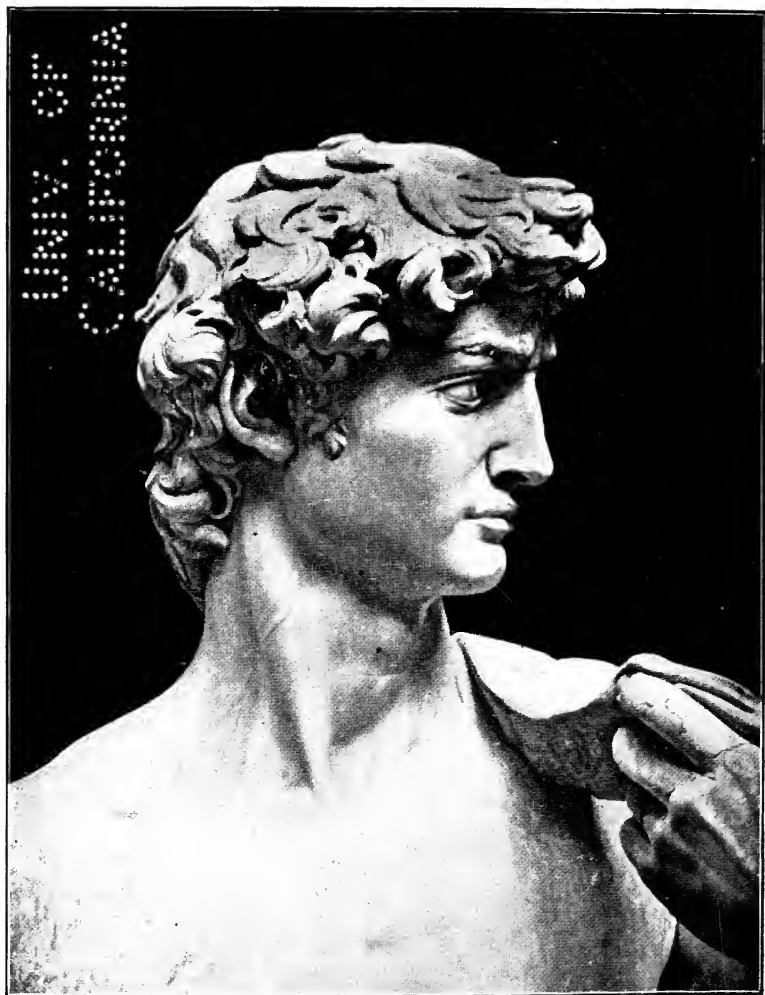
Pittsburg, Pa.

"*The Outlook* repeatedly commended this work while it was in course of serial publication. Mr. Sheldon is widely known as a teacher in ethics. He bears influential testimony that he has become more and more impressed with the value of the stories of the Old Testament as a means for the ethical instruction of the young."—*The Outlook*, Dec. 27, 1902.

"The ever recurring desire on the part of so many that the Bible may form a part of the public school curriculum seems to be met by Mr. Sheldon's book. Mr. Sheldon proceeds on the presumption that the reading of the Bible should be the task and privilege of adult minds, and his present work is a re-written version of certain essential stories for the express purpose of interesting and instructing younger minds, so that when they come to read the other version the story, with its essential facts, is already known."—*Chicago Tribune*, Jan. 24, 1903.

"Now that the study of the Bible in the schools is being urged, from the literary as well as the religious standpoint, many will welcome Mr. Sheldon's efforts to meet this demand."—*Baltimore American*, Dec. 6, 1902.

"We do not see why this book could not go into any family or Sunday-school to do its work as a teacher of ethics without coming into conflict with any theological prejudices."—*Christian Register*, Boston, Feb. 12, 1903.



DAVID

THE OLD TESTAMENT BIBLE STORIES

AS A BASIS FOR
THE ETHICAL INSTRUCTION OF THE
YOUNG

REVISED EDITION



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PREFACE.

It has been as a teacher in ethics that the author has become more and more impressed with the value of the Old Testament Bible Stories as a means for the ethical instruction of the young. From this standpoint alone they are without parallel in the world's literature. What is more, they can be used for this purpose by all classes of serious minds. For the devout Christian, or the pious Jew, for the agnostic, or oriental Buddhist, they teach the same lesson, and it is a lesson on which they can all agree. Each person may add his own theological interpretations, but he can have but one opinion as to the moral truth to be found there. From the picture of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden down to the death of Solomon, it is a narrative saturated all the way through with the stern teaching of ethical experience. And it may be well to give these stories to the mind when it is quite young—perhaps at the early age from seven to ten years. It is then, if not before, that the specific education of the conscience should begin; and the best means for this purpose at the outset would be these stories from life itself.

But, on the other hand, every one is aware that the Bible was intended as Scriptures for adult minds. The conscience of the child cannot take truth home in the form in which the adult would receive it. Under these circumstances we are not dealing irreverently in rearranging this material in simpler story form for the young mind, putting it in such shape that the ethical lesson shall stand out conspicuously and free from certain complications in which the language in the Scriptures themselves may be involved.

Few persons, unless they had made the effort, would

realize what delicate and difficult problems are involved in such an undertaking. The author has been at work upon it for several years, weighing and considering each point with painstaking care. He appreciates that a life-time might well be employed in this one task. The language, as will be seen, is in the first person singular, as if one were talking to children of seven or eight years of age.

Years of study and reflection have only emphasized the regard which the author has felt for the moral truths to be found in these Scriptures. It may be explained on his part that he has for a long period of time been at work on a complete and graded course of ethical instruction for young people from seven years of age up to adult life. At the basis of it all, however, he wishes to use for the very corner stone the "Old Testament Bible Stories."

WALTER L. SHELDON,

4065 Delmar Avenue,

August 10th, 1902.

St. Louis, Mo.

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Special Suggestions to the Teachers Using These Bible Stories.

It is to be kept in mind that these stories are to be read to children and not by them. They are not to be classed as children's literature. It is the parent or teacher who should use them as a means for the ethical instruction of the young.

With the same thought in view, it would be advisable not to read to the pupils many of these chapters continuously as if they were a story book. On the contrary, they should be taken up separately, one by one, talked over, discussed, explained, analyzed and thoroughly mastered. They are intended as lessons rather than as stories.

As Bible stories they should be kept distinct in the minds of the young from the stories to be found in other literature. They should stand out by themselves as of peculiar value and significance. It is to be remembered that there is an ethical thread pervading these narratives, of a kind such as we find nowhere else in the ancient world. Young people should feel a certain reverence or awe for stories as coming from the Bible—apart from whatever standpoint may be taken with regard to the doctrine of inspiration. On this account it were better not to narrate any other stories in connection with these. Do not introduce material from other literatures while using the stories from the Bible.

In using these stories for children there are two purposes in view. On the one hand it is desired that young people should know these tales because the material is classic, and therefore, essential to the culture of every educated person. Not to be acquainted with

the Bible stories should bring any person into contempt. They are the basis of the literature and the culture of Christendom. Young people should therefore be thoroughly familiar with them, acquiring the main points at an early age so as to hold them in memory clearly and definitely for the rest of their days.

Try hard, therefore, just to fix the general run of the tales in the minds of the little ones. After reading over a story aloud, let one of the pupils repeat it back while the others listen and make corrections. There could each time be a review of the previous stories which have been discussed, and the young people might take turns in giving the narratives in the presence of the other members of the class. This should be done over and over again as much as the children will endure without growing tired of it. But there needs to be a great deal of repetition. It is important that the young people should not only be familiar with each story, but be able to preserve the connection between the narratives as a whole.

Because of the importance of these tales as Stories from the Bible, it is advisable to emphasize special details, dwelling particularly on phrases which have become classic in history, such as "Making bricks without straw," "Flesh pots of Egypt," "Entertaining Angels unawares," and others of the same kind. The young people should remember definitely where such phrases occur and what is meant by them. So, too, there should be constant repetition of the prominent names in the narrative. These should be listed and written out on the blackboard, so that they shall become fixed lastingly on the mind. Here, too, there should be a great deal of reviewing and repetition.

In reading the stories aloud it may often be possible to extend the material, making three or four paragraphs of one paragraph, by introducing more words or explanatory conversation. The success in doing this will depend upon the personal gifts of the teacher. It might be advisable at one time to have the story read as it stands here, and on another occasion to go

over it with much expansion. The danger, of course, is that the teacher may introduce extraneous material and interfere with the main import of the lesson as it stands.

When the quotations are met with, they should be left and read exactly as they are, with no interpolations or modifications. This is very important, because we have endeavored in this direction to introduce the quaint and beautiful English of the Old English Bible. It would be well, therefore, to preserve the style in such quotations, even where the words are quite large, as these can be explained afterwards.

As to the inevitable question, sure to come, whether the stories are true, the answer will depend upon the parent or teacher using them. The problem here, of course, is a very important one. We are to consider what kind of an effect will come in later years from a study of this literature by the young people when they grow older. It is vital that the feeling of respect and awe for the ethical teachings of the Bible should not be shaken through any disillusion coming from a discovery of the want of accuracy in these narratives on the historical side. At the same time, it would probably be a mistake to go into an analysis of the various parts of this material, to discuss what is and what is not historical. One answer to the question of the children might be that these stories are "some true and some not true"—implying that there is an element of truth running through them, while we may not perhaps know in regard to the special points. We can explain how these stories arose a long time ago, and therefore, how we cannot be perfectly sure as to the details of all the facts described. If possible, what we desire is to make the young people see that there is a truth to the sentiment of the stories, even where there may not always be truth in the incidents narrated. But after the question has once been asked and answered, it should be put aside and not brought up again.

As to the element of the Supernatural which is introduced, here again the treatment must depend on the

individual parent or teacher. It must be remembered that there would be almost nothing to these stories without that element. What is more, the children are still at an age when the natural and the supernatural run together, as they have not begun to rationalize or to know what is meant by the "laws of nature." For those who might object to the element of the Supernatural under other circumstances, it may here be considered as harmless, unless it is very much exaggerated. On the other hand, there may be those who desire to treat it as actual occurrence. The chief caution to be given on this score is that if emphasis is laid too much on the Supernatural, there is a very decided loss in the value of the ethical element in the narrative.

There may be a strong desire on the part of certain parents or teachers to go back to the Bible and introduce more of the passages there. If this is tried, however, it should be done with a great deal of caution. The trouble with the Bible as it stands is that it was written for the adult mind. There is danger lest young people get an erroneous impression by reading that literature as it stands, and then having that impression so fixed that it can never be eradicated. In reading to young people strictly from the Bible there is, therefore, a necessity for so much side-explanation that unfortunate consequences may follow. It may also bring on a confusion of mind to the child from which he will never escape.

The age for which these stories are adapted would perhaps range from seven to nine years. If used for children younger than this, their deeper significance is lost sight of in the mere story; so that when used at a later age they will not be listened to or truly appreciated. In this way interest in them may be dulled before the mind is awakened.

The most delicate of all problems with regard to the method of introducing Bible stories to children has to do with names of the Deity, because of the number of terms employed for this purpose in Sacred Literature. If we introduce the whole subject to the young mind,

giving it just as it stands in the Bible, it may prove disastrous for the person's theistic conceptions later on when he has become mature. It is debatable whether the name for the Deity as presented in the high and exalted conception of the prophets, should be employed for the more realistic conceptions of the subject as found in parts of Genesis. After mature consideration, the author has decided, therefore, to use the name "Lord" for this purpose throughout the Stories, alternating perhaps with the terms "Ruler of the World," or "Ruler Over All." In this way, the generic term "God" is left for the time when the young person approaches the profound theistic attitude of the Prophets. By this means the conception of deity as such can be reserved for the generic name. Another method might be to use the historic Hebrew name "Yahweh" throughout these Stories. This would be in many ways the most satisfactory method, if it were not for the fact that such a name would probably always seem remote and far away and never really come into general use.

The second reason why these stories should be brought home to young people is because of the ethical element running through them. Beyond any question, they are more satisfactory and of greater value in this direction, than any other literature of antiquity. No other series of early tales bring out this element to the same extent. While it may be asserted that in many special instances the moral standpoint is not satisfactory, yet the dominant thread of them as a whole is ethical in the extreme. When used in the right way, they are unquestionably the finest material extant for bringing home the distinction between good and evil to the young mind. The point of the entire narrative from beginning to end is involved in the lesson: *Be sure your sin will find you out.*

Our supreme purpose, therefore, in these stories should be to use them as a means for arousing the latent conscience or ethical sense in the young. It is to be an influence on the sentiments of children.

We are to bear down hard on the ethical side. And this is just what we are able to do consistently in these Bible Stories.

When the children, therefore, tell the stories themselves, it might be well to have them put in the moral lesson involved. Only, do not have this come at the end of the story, like the tiresome "moral" in the old-style fables. It should be introduced rather as a kind of reflection or observation while the story is being told, just in the way anybody might talk or philosophize when telling any event he had heard about. The success of the "moralizing" all depends on the way it is done. It may be carried on very effectively for young children if parents or teachers understand the right method. But under any circumstances it should be constantly in the mind of the teacher or parent that these lessons are to be used as offering the foundation or starting point for an entire course of ethical instruction for the young.

It should be observed that there are a few conspicuous points brought out over and over again in these lessons. This repetition is intentional. We should aim to some extent to anticipate the elements of that kind of ethical instruction which life itself, or every day experience, is to bring home or teach to the mature. In these teachings, therefore, we begin to sound the notes, here and there, of those life-lessons which should be developed or elaborated in a future course of ethical instruction.

The "lesson" in these stories is always bold and emphatic. And this is the characteristic throughout the stories in the Bible. It would be a mistake to try to refine too much in the moralizing, or to go too far in self-scrutiny. When wickedness occurs in these stories it is usually very pronounced. And the ethical teachings are of the elemental kind, against murder, disobedience, lying, stealing or pride. For our purpose this characteristic of the Bible stories is very valuable. The lines are sharply drawn.

A fact that will strike the children all through the

lessons is that nearly all the great characters at one time or another committed some act of wickedness. There is no way of overlooking this circumstance, although it grows tiresome and monotonous. The chief Bible characters present a striking mixture of good and evil. But, as a rule, it will be seen that wickedness is condemned and in one way or another gets punished.

In the moralizing it is very important to be careful not to try to show how some one act of wickedness always gets punished directly or in a certain way. This might be very misleading to the children's minds by making them think that somehow unhappiness or suffering invariably accompanies the wrong act. Experience later on would disabuse them of this impression and cause a sense of disillusion which would be most unfortunate. What these stories do convey is that the general trend of things is against wickedness, condemning and opposing it. This should be brought out by the way the stories are told, rather than by saying it outright. The whole purport of these tales is to bring out this one point, so as to arouse a feeling against wrong conduct, against evil deeds, against "wickedness." We must somehow impress it on the young mind that there is some kind of woe betiding wickedness if not always betiding at once or directly the wicked man. What we are aiming for is to create a sentiment as if somehow the whole universe were bearing down on wickedness.

Take care in these lessons not to use the word "conscience" too much. The little ones may be inclined to introduce the term over and over again from the way it is used in their homes. It may be employed now and then, but with caution and reserve. The same thought applies to the terms "being good" or "sense of duty." We must not wear out these solemn words or phrases by too much repetition. On the other hand, we can simplify the language of course, trying to talk in the way moth-

ers would speak to their children, using such words as "naughty," "bad," "mischievous," or whatever terms the little ones are accustomed to as applying to evil conduct or good conduct.

In telling these stories it must not be overlooked that we are taking the children into a world of which they know very little, and about which they only have dreams or vague impressions. Hence we may often find it necessary to develop the terms we use. Such a word as "king," for instance, needs to be talked over a great deal, so that the young people should have some definite notion of what it implies. Language of this kind needs to be brought down to the level of their experience. On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that even young children are rapidly acquiring knowledge. They have already come in contact with certain of the great relations in life. They know what it is to have their own way and be able to do what they please; or, on the other hand, to be obliged to obey. They even know what it is to make others obey them. They know what home means and the love of father and mother. They have probably caught some notion of wickedness; they have already had experience with selfishness on the one hand, or kindness on the other. We all know that children may understand a great deal more than they are able to explain.

In order to emphasize the ethical elements in these lessons, it will be well from time to time, besides asking the children to repeat the stories they have heard, to have them go back and mention the good and evil deeds of each of the characters. Catechise them as to what the sin of Moses was, what wicked act was committed by David, what wrong conduct Saul was guilty of, what blameworthy act we know of in the life of Jacob, what noble deed is told concerning Abraham, what kind of generous spirit David showed at one time to Saul.

As regards the picture material to be used in connection with these stories, one or two important con-

siderations must be taken into account. Undoubtedly it will be of service when suitable illustrations are presented, in order to give a more concrete background to the narrative. But this step should always be taken with a great deal of forethought. The trouble is that a large number of the pictures ordinarily used in illustrating the Bible stories, emphasize the "wonder" features of the story rather than the lesson it teaches. In this way they may act as a distraction rather than a positive assistance in the instructive work.

So far as these Bible stories are employed for educational purposes, the teacher is advised to make only selections from the illustrated Bibles, or the miscellaneous material offered in this direction—taking chiefly pictures which bring out the landscape or scenery, the dress or social customs of Palestine at that time. This may serve to give an air of realism to the narrative while not throwing the emphasis in the wrong direction. But fanciful pictures aiming to bring in the supernatural elements should be used with caution. Such material may become fixed indelibly on the young mind and foster a realistic anthropomorphism which may never be eradicated. At the same time, of course, in this matter as in all others, the author does not wish to be dogmatic and must leave the final decision on this subject with the teacher.

We repeat: use these stories as a means for teaching the rudimentary principles of ethics, for the purpose of arousing the latent ethical sense of the young.

PART I.

THE EARLY WORLD.

CHAPTER I.

The Garden of Eden.

I am going to tell you a beautiful old story of the far away time, hundreds and thousands of years ago. Just how long ago it was, we cannot say. It takes us back to those days when there were no people on the earth—no men, no women, no children. The sky was there, the sea was there, and the land was there. But there were no people to look up at the sky, or to travel on the seas or to till the soil. Just think how quiet and lonesome it must have seemed with nobody there; all the great world and no man in it!

It seems that the Great Being, the Ruler of the World, whom we shall speak of in these stories as the Lord—it seems at last that he had made up his mind there must be a change. There ought to be people in this beautiful world. All those stars up there in the sky should not be there without being looked at; and the beautiful flowers and trees and streams of water pleased him so much that he felt there ought to be human beings who should look at all these and delight in them. And so he decided that he would put people on the earth; that it should no longer be solitary and lonesome everywhere, because there would be men and women who could see the world, admire it and take pleasure in it.

But first he thought it wise to make a beautiful garden, where man should dwell. Now, the Ruler of the World, of course, must have known a great deal

and been able to do about anything he wanted to do. Somewhere, therefore, over in far away Asia, he chose a place for his garden; and he planted it with trees of all kinds. You can have no idea what was growing there. Everything that was fair to look upon or that could please the eye was in that garden. Beautiful ferns grew all about, in the woods and along the streams. Tall oak trees and maple trees and elm trees were there, and palms without number. Then, too, there were all kinds of fruit trees laden with the richest fruits. There was the apple tree and the pear tree and the trees bearing plums and oranges and pomegranates. All the fruits that you could think of, were growing on those trees.

And then, furthermore, as to the flowers,—oh, if only you could have a picture of all the flowers that grew in that garden; small and great, and of all the tints and colors of the rainbow! There were flowers as small as a tiny dewdrop; others again larger than any we ever see nowadays. And there were all kinds of birds in that garden; song-birds building their nests in the trees, or along the brookside, or in the grasses. There was the mocking-bird and the oriole, and birds of such rare and wonderful plumage that the eye of man would be dazzled just to look upon them. There was the bird of paradise, that you know of, and others perhaps even more beautiful than the bird of paradise.

Of course, there were animals of all kinds, living under the trees, playing together in the water, or roaming through the fields. Over it all was the great and glorious dome of the sky, with the stars and moon shining by night, and the sun shining by day. But it was never too hot there, nor too cold. If the winds blew, they blew gently and never did any harm. No awful cyclones tore down the trees, or made the birds and animals afraid. If it rained, it never rained too much, but only just enough to water the ground and make the grasses grow nicely, and to keep the plants and the trees fresh and green in their verdure.

Just think what a place that would be to live in!

It was called, as you know, the Garden of Eden. And yet no man had seen it. All that beauty, and no human eye to look upon it or to take pleasure in it! When all was ready and the garden was made, the Ruler of the World decided that he would make a man to live in that garden and to take care of it, and to have it all for his own beautiful home. This man was to be the Gardener of Eden.

And so, as we are told, the Lord took some dust of the ground and shaped it into the form of a man. But there it was, that form with no life in it—as yet only the dust of the ground. It was a beautiful form, fair and shapely. And then what do you suppose he did? Why, as we are told, “He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.” And the man’s name, as you know, was Adam.

He was placed there all alone in that beautiful garden, where he was to have his home. Can you fancy anything more delightful than a home like that garden, all made for you, just of the kind that you would like, with every possible flower or tree that you could think of or care for; with all the fruits that you might care to look at, or care to taste of; and to be able to wander there as you pleased, taking what you wanted, doing just as you liked, never being obliged to work too hard, only just to have the care of that wonderful garden! But the Lord of the World did not think it well that Adam should have his own way altogether. That would be a mistake. It is never well for any human being to be able to do exactly as he pleases. And so Adam was told that he might eat of any of the fruits he found there, from any of the trees anywhere, save the fruit of just one tree. That one fruit he was not to taste. Adam might look at it, admire it, enjoy the beauty of it, but he was not to taste of it. This was just what the Lord said to him, if you would like to know the exact words: “Of every tree of the Garden, thou mayest freely eat; but of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it.”

Surely Adam had no reason to complain. What

should it matter to him that there was this one fruit he was never to taste of? Did he not have all the other fruits that he could desire, many kinds, for instance, sweeter to the taste than any we may have nowadays? You see it was important that Adam should learn to obey.

But by and by Adam began to be a little unhappy. Can you guess why? "Because he could not taste that fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil," do you say? No, not at all. He was quite content with what he had. He may have wandered around that tree and looked at it and admired it. But he was satisfied not to touch it. Yet he was a little unhappy. It was because he was all alone in that garden. Sometimes it seemed to him that he would rather give up all the beauty there and not have that garden any longer, if only he could have a companion, some one to live with, some one to talk to. There were times when he wanted to point out to some one what he saw and what he liked; times when he wanted to ask advice of some person like himself.

At last, after a while, the Great Ruler took pity upon Adam, and thought it best to give him a companion, so that the man should not be all alone by himself in that beautiful place. But first, before he had done this, we are told that it was necessary that all the birds of the air and the beasts of the field living in that garden should have names. And so they were brought, one by one, to Adam; and Adam gave names to them, to the cattle, the fowls of the air, and to every beast of the field. But still he was all alone.

One day, however, the Lord put him to sleep; and then, as we are told, he did a wonderful thing. He took one of the ribs of Adam, closing up the flesh again, while the man was asleep, and out of that rib he fashioned another human being. And what kind of a human being do you suppose it was? Would it have been a person just like Adam, do you fancy? "No, of course not," you say; "it would have been a woman." Yes, it was a beautiful woman. And when Adam awoke from his sleep, there before his eyes,

like himself, and yet not like himself, stood a human being, a companion for him, a "helpmeet," as the companion was called. And as Adam looked upon her, he said: "This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman." And her name, as you know, was Eve.

And there they were, Adam and Eve, as man and wife. Now Adam was perfectly happy. He had a companion and a wife. They could work together by day and could talk together of what they saw. In the darkness of the night they could look up to the skies, gaze at the stars and give names to them, if they wanted to; or they could listen to the breezes blowing through the trees, hear the animals creeping along quietly through the woods, because, as you know, animals like to wander about at night, just as we like to wander about by day.

But the most beautiful part of it all was, that Adam and Eve were both perfectly good; they had never known what it was to do wrong. They did not even know about Evil. Adam had told his wife about that Tree of Knowledge, and how they might taste of every fruit of every tree in that garden, but were to let the fruit of that one tree alone. And they were happy and they obeyed the command laid upon them.

All was so pure and so innocent in those days that man and woman, as you know, did not even wear any clothes. They walked about just as they had been made by the Ruler of the World. It never crossed their minds to feel any sense of shame because they were naked. They were happy, pure and innocent, thinking to themselves how they would go on there, year after year, living in that garden forever and ever and ever; always being happy, always having what they wanted to eat, never being obliged to work too hard, and yet having plenty to do to keep them busy. They did not know what it was to be idle or wasteful of their time. They just worked, but never seemed to grow tired.

At last, however, I am sorry to say, something happened. I almost dread to tell you about it; and yet

it must be told. By and by an awful shadow fell upon that garden. It came quite suddenly, and all was changed.

One day while Eve was wandering alone by herself, she met a serpent. We are told how in those times animals could talk; and while Eve was looking about, not far away from that Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, the fruit of which she was never to taste, the serpent began to speak to her. He told her how happy she was and what a nice thing it was to be able to do exactly as one pleased all the while. And she felt even more happy thinking of it as the serpent went on speaking.

But then he began to talk in another way. There was a slight tone of pity in his voice as he looked toward that Tree not far away, and said, "Yes, but then you cannot quite have your own way. You must not taste of that tree over there." And as Eve looked at the tree, for the first time a desire entered her heart to taste of its fruit. She had never even thought of it before or cared anything about it; until this serpent had looked upon her with slight pity, because she could not do altogether as she pleased, since it was necessary for her to obey one command.

And as she looked at the Tree, a change came over her face. It was just as if a sort of shadow fell from the sky, a thin cloud passing over the face of the sun. She was not quite happy; and she said to herself: "Well, after all, I do wish I might taste of the fruit of that one tree." And she grew more and more unhappy as she went on thinking about it. It seemed to her as if she did not care to taste of the fruits of any other of the trees of the garden. There were still oranges and apples and plums and pears and pomegranates; there were all kinds of grapes—anything and everything almost, that she cared for. But somehow when she thought of these, no pleasure came to her. She just wanted to taste of the fruit of that Forbidden Tree.

Then the serpent went on talking to her still more; and he said to her: "Why do you feel that you should

obey such a command not to taste of the fruit of that Tree there before you? If you once taste of that fruit, you will become wise, you will become like your Lord himself, the Ruler of the World. He has forbidden you to taste that fruit, lest you become as great as he is. If you eat of that fruit, then you will know what Good and Evil are; you will know about Right and Wrong."

Now, as we have said, Adam and Eve knew nothing about Right and Wrong; they had never done anything evil; they did not even know what such words meant. But Eve went on thinking more and more; and she said to herself, "I would like to know what Good and Evil are; what is meant by Right and Wrong." And as she thought this, she drew nearer and nearer to that Tree of Knowledge, until she came quite close to it and looked into the branches, and saw how they were laden with a fruit whose color was more beautiful than the color of any other fruit in the Garden. But even as she thought of the command upon her, she reached her hand into the branches of that tree and plucked the fruit and held it and looked at it; and then she put it nearer and nearer to her mouth and at last she tasted it.

Do you see what had happened? Can you fancy the awful shadow which must have fallen upon the garden at that moment? Those two people might have stayed there forever and ever, always innocent and happy, if only Eve had not tasted the Fruit of that Tree. And then what do you suppose she did? At first the fruit had seemed sweet to her, and she had liked it. For a moment her heart's desire was satisfied. She had done just what she pleased. She felt perfectly free and no longer obliged to obey. Then she rushed to find Adam and told him what she had done, and gave him some of the fruit to eat. And he took it and began also to eat of that Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

They had done it at last. They had broken the command. They had disobeyed. They knew now what was meant by Right and Wrong, because they

had done wrong themselves. Then all of a sudden, for the first time since their eyes had opened on that beautiful garden when the breath of life had been breathed into them and they had become living souls, it came into their minds that they had no clothes on, that they were naked,—so that they felt ashamed. But do you suppose this shame was felt because they had no clothes? No, I fancy it was a shame because they had broken the command of their Lord; because they had disobeyed. And they wanted to get rid of that shame, if they only knew how; and so they went and gathered some large fig leaves, and sewed them together and made aprons or garments for themselves, and put them on, in order that they might be rid of that feeling of shame in their hearts.

But for some reason the feeling of shame did not go away. Now for the first time they were afraid to meet their Master, who had placed them there. Heretofore, whenever they had met him, they were glad to talk with him as their Ruler; as the one who had given them this garden, and breathed into them the breath of life. And so they went and hid themselves, where the trees were thick in a corner of the garden, in order that the Ruler of the World might not see them. All the pleasure seemed to have gone out of their lives. The delight which they had first felt in taking of that forbidden fruit, had all gone away. It was no longer a pleasure to them to feel that they had done just what they pleased.

And now, towards evening, the Lord, their Ruler, came to the garden to talk with Adam and Eve. But he could not see them anywhere. And at last he called out to Adam, saying: "Where art thou?" And the sound of the voice went traveling over the Garden, under the trees, along the edge of the grasses; the animals heard it, and the birds; even the leaves of the trees seemed to be quiet just then. And the voice came to Adam and Eve in their hiding place. They knew that they dared not stay there any longer. They had to come forth.

And then Adam spoke, saying: "I heard thy voice

in the garden and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." And his Master looked him straight in the eyes, seeming to look way beyond into his very soul, as he asked him: "Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of that Tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?" And what sort of an answer do you suppose Adam gave? Did he stand forth like a brave man and say, "Yes, I did eat of that Tree of Knowledge"? Where was the courage which he and Eve had always felt in that beautiful garden? No, they knew now what evil was. Adam no longer was the brave, strong, fearless man he used to be. He had become a coward. And he turned and said, "The woman whom thou gavest me, she gave me of the Tree and I did eat." Can you fancy the expression on the face of Adam as he made that speech? Was this the man who had been so happy and so pure in that beautiful garden? Just think of the meanness of it all, that he should have turned and tried to lay the blame for it on his wife.

But there was no use trying to escape from the one who had placed them there. Their Ruler turned to the woman and said, "What is this thou hast done?" And Eve answered, "The serpent did beguile me and I did eat." Thus you see, they had both become cowards; they had done the evil in order that they might feel that they could do exactly as they pleased. And now they could do much less as they pleased than before. They knew what it was to be afraid. All the pleasures of life seemed gone for them.

The garden was there still, the beautiful Garden of Eden! The noise of the waters of the brooks flowing in and out among the trees could still be heard; the birds sang just as sweetly and their plumage carried the same beautiful colors as before. There was the sky overhead and the shining stars by night. Soft breezes blew in and out among the trees. It was still the same beautiful garden.

But to Adam and Eve it had all changed. They knew well enough that they had no right there any

more; that it was no longer truly their home. They felt only too plainly that they would have to go forth and leave that garden. They did not have to wait for what would be said to them; in their hearts they understood. They knew well enough that that garden was no place for people who had done wrong and felt ashamed.

And so at last came the awful words of their Lord. They listened, bowed down almost to the earth, as he spoke: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." And as these words were spoken, Adam and Eve looked away, and there stood the gates of the garden open before them. They knew what the open gates meant; they were to be cast out from that beautiful home, to go forth to toil and suffer, because they had done evil and had learned what Right and Wrong really meant.

They dared not look their Ruler in the face. Turning away, hand in hand, they walked along until they came to the gate; then they gave one last look behind at that beautiful home where they had fancied they were to live forever and ever and ever. And as a cloud passed over the face of the sun and the shadow fell before them, they walked out through the gate, to return there no more. As it all closed behind them there was placed at the east end of the garden a flaming sword, warning Adam and Eve that they were never to enter there again. These two people had learned what it meant to listen to the voice of temptation and to disobey.

TO THE TEACHER: The Story of the Garden of Eden is essentially a lesson in the steps which a person may take when yielding to temptation. Each one of these steps should therefore be carefully considered as they come out in the narrative. Point out how Eve could have conquered the bad inclination, if she had refused to think about it and checked the evil desire at the start. As a second feature, dwell on the

effects of yielding to the suggestion of the Tempter, especially as those effects manifested themselves at once in the change of character on the part of Eve; how selfishness at once showed itself in the wish to have a companion in guilt, in spite of the dreadful consequences which might ensue. We see the affection between Adam and Eve giving way to petty recrimination or thoughtless disregard of each other's welfare, as they try to shirk the blame for what they had done. Emphasize special phrases or terms which have become fixed in human speech, as, for instance, the Tree of Knowledge, the Flaming Sword, etc.

MEMORY VERSES: *He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.*

Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of that tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?

Cursed is the ground for thy sake. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.

CHAPTER II.

The Murder of Abel.

We come now to another kind of story. I have to tell you about two brothers in that far away time, thousands and thousands of years ago, not long after Adam and Eve had been cast out of the Garden of Eden. The entire earth was before these two people—Adam and Eve. There was room enough and to spare. The whole country was there for them to travel over; only now they knew what it was to be tired. For at last they understood what it meant to be obliged to work harder than they ever worked before; to go on toiling when they needed rest. They knew now what it was, at times, to be hungry and not have enough to eat. They were only too glad to get anything they could find, even if it were not sweet to the taste.

We can imagine how they must have talked together of that garden; at times perhaps they went back near the gates, longing to enter there once more, until they saw the flame of the sword and knew that it was hopeless. They must have talked of the evil they had been guilty of, and kept wishing and wishing they had not done it. But it was too late. The only thing left for them now to do, was to go forth and earn their bread in the sweat of their faces, as the Lord had said to them.

And by and by there was a larger home. Children came and were growing up around them; sons and daughters who had never been in the Garden of Eden, and may have known little about it,—because, I fancy, even the father and mother no longer liked to talk about it in the presence of their children. It was all different now. They were clothed somewhat as we wear clothes nowadays.

After a while two of their sons grew up into manhood. They were strong fellows, and brave in their ways. They had been obliged to work hard in order to help their father and mother to earn their living, in getting enough to eat and in providing for the needs at home. They knew what it was to feel the chill of the cold and to suffer from the heat. They sighed for the rays of the sun in the night time, and shrank from its rays by day. And yet some happiness was coming back to the father and mother in the delight they felt in their home and their children. Even if there was trouble for them now, and hard work, hunger and cold, yet they had their home and their little ones. And I suppose they were hoping that their sons and daughters would grow up into manhood or into womanhood, and be brave and good and not be guilty of wrong in the way they had been guilty themselves.

Now and then they were still aware of the presence of their Lord, the Ruler of the World. If he laid any commands upon them, they tried hard enough not to disobey. And they hoped that their little ones would learn the commands laid upon them and not always expect to do just as they pleased. Can you fancy what sort of a home they must have had—Adam and Eve and their children—when there were no other people on the earth? They had to take care of themselves in all sorts of ways; make their own clothes; build their own homes; prepare their own food. Not only that, but there were dangers all around them. They knew now what it was to be afraid in the dark, as the wild animals went roaming by.

But still they wanted to keep the friendship of their Great Master, even if he had cast them out of the beautiful Garden of Eden. They knew they had been to blame, because they had disobeyed. And in those times, as you know, they used to think that the way to please their Ruler who had made them was to build altars and make offerings there. They wanted to show their readiness to give up their wilfulness and to obey. They had had enough of doing just altogether as they pleased, and they were only too anxious

to prove that they knew how to give up what they cared for, and to make "sacrifices," as we say. And so they would build an altar of stone and afterwards bring offerings there from time to time; it might be the fruits which they had gathered; it might be what they had taken from the soil which they had tilled; or it might be from their flocks or herds, the sheep or cattle which they owned.

I am telling you all this because it belongs to the story of those two brothers, one of them named Cain and the other, Abel. They were not alike, because people are never alike. Each person has his own nature, his own way of doing things, his own feelings, his own character. Then, too, some persons behave in one way, and others in another, as you know. Some people will get angry, but control themselves and not speak; others will get angry and speak it out and hurt people's feelings. Some have more bad feelings than others. There is no way of telling quite what a boy or girl is going to be. It all depends so much on themselves.

And these two boys, as we have said, were not at all alike. They were not bad, exactly; but one of them was given to getting angry every now and then. It may be that both of them had these feelings at times; but if so, the one whose name was Abel somehow kept his feelings to himself and did not allow them to control him. When something went wrong and he felt like using wicked language, or striking some one against whom he was angry, he would go away by himself, perhaps, until the feeling within him had quieted down. And as he grew older, he found that the feeling of anger did not come to him as often; or, if it did come, it was easier and easier for him to control it,—so that he did not say the evil words on his lips or act in the way he first felt inclined to do.

But I am sorry to say that it was otherwise with Cain, the other brother. As I have said, he was not what you would call quite a bad boy. He was generous and brave, and his father and mother were very fond of him. They knew that he was not selfish and

that he was not mean. Then, too, he worked hard in order to help the family, and was never idle. But he had the bad habit of losing his temper, and the father and mother were sorry over this and tried to do all they could to persuade their boy to learn self-control. But he did not seem to care. "What if I do get angry," he said to himself, "I get over it by and by, and they cannot say I am mean or selfish or do not work. Even if I hurt their feelings, I may ask them to forgive me; and they seem to love me just the same."

Yet he knew this was not all quite true. He was aware of the pain he gave in his home. It was just that he would not take the trouble to try to conquer himself. All the while, Adam and Eve were thinking of what they had done, themselves, in the garden of Eden, and how they had yielded to temptation and at last been guilty of disobedience and had done wrong. They did not want to talk of this to their boys; but it was always on their minds lest this boy, by and by, should yield to some temptation, and before he knew it, do something awfully bad, as they had done.

As the boys grew up, the father had made Cain a tiller of the ground, because, I suppose, Cain was strong and worked so well. On the other hand, he had made Abel a keeper of sheep. This lad was to tend the flocks, staying with them by night and by day, watching and caring for them, living outdoors in the open country, and being a shepherd.

These boys had been taught by their father and mother that they must respect their Lord, the one who had made that beautiful Garden of Eden of which the children had been told. And so from time to time they made their offerings on the altar built by Adam and Eve. Now, their father and mother had told the boys when they grew up, that for some reason they should make these offerings from the flocks of sheep, and not from the fruits of the ground. They gave no reason why; they simply told the boys to do this and to obey. It may be that Adam and Eve wanted in this way to teach Cain how to control himself and to learn to "give in."

But as the two boys grew up to manhood, Cain being a tiller of the soil, as you remember, it somehow rankled in his mind that it was not fair that the offerings on the altar should be from the flocks of sheep, when he had no sheep and was a tiller of the soil. He did not say anything about this or talk it over with his mother or father, or ask the reason for it. He just kept brooding over it and got more and more worked up, until finally he made up his mind that he was not going to stand it any longer. He said to himself, "I will do as I please. If I am a tiller of the soil, I will make my offerings from the fruits of the soil, and Abel can make his offerings from his flocks as a shepherd."

It was awfully sad, when we come to think of it, that the father and mother knew nothing of all this. They had hoped in this way to teach their boy self-command. Now it was all working the other way. At last, Cain went to the altar and laid on it the fruits of the earth. He knew down in his heart that it was not a true offering. He was well aware that it was make-believe. But it was all the same to him; he was going to do just as he pleased. All the while, however, he was angry in his heart. We can imagine him as he must have gone around in those days, thinking within himself how he would do just as he pleased and make his offering in his own way. On the other hand, Abel, who had gradually learned how to control himself and to obey, had gone and made his offering from his sheep by sacrificing one of them on the altar.

By and by Cain came back to the altar and saw the offerings there. He knew perfectly well that he had done wrong; that he had acted in a spirit of anger; that what he had placed there was not the true offering at all. It was not the kind he had been commanded to make. At the same time he saw there on the altar the offering of Abel, his brother, and he knew that Abel had done what was right. Then, somehow, he began to feel jealous and grew more and more angry. Instead of going and changing his offering, as he ought to have done, he went out and sought his brother and found him among the flocks not far away.

And then he poured out all the angry feelings in his heart; he was jealous and he expressed his dislike very strongly, although all the while being really ashamed and feeling mean because he knew he himself was really to blame. Then, all of a sudden, he struck Abel a blow, and his brother fell to the ground. He looked and saw his brother lying there perfectly still; he leaned over; there was no sign of life. It was Abel, his brother—his own brother Abel! And as he looked, all the anger in his heart began to melt away, and he grew pale. He watched the still face; but there was no sign of life. He stared at the great dark spot there on the white face where he had struck the blow; and at last it dawned on his mind what he had done. In his anger he had killed his own brother Abel!

Then he arose from his knees, knowing that he had been guilty of murder. He looked around him; there was nobody by. He looked up into the sky as if he feared some one there. But the sky was empty; he saw only the blue dome overhead. He heard a sound as if some one were coming nearer; but it was only the sound of the sheep near by. He put his hand to his forehead and it was cold and moist to the touch, although the bright, clear, warm sun was shining everhead.

Then he looked down again at his brother. Still Abel did not move. And Cain began to tremble; he was shaking from head to foot. He reached out his arms as if to take hold of something to help him; but there was nothing for him to take hold of. There he was, alone with the body of his brother whom he had murdered. Then, at last, he too understood what it was to have been guilty of evil. Sad for him it was that he had not known or understood all the while in his earlier days whenever he had given way to anger, that it would bring him to worse evil at last, great and bitter evil. Whenever he had lost his temper he had been guilty of evil. But, as we have said, he had always overlooked that. And when the anger was gone, he had behaved kindly, even bravely and unselfishly in the

home, so that it had never even crossed his mind that he would at last strike his brother in this way.

What was he to do? He looked down again, and then looked around him once more. He did not know how to act. Suddenly he said to himself: "I must fly. I shall be punished. I have been guilty of murder." And he started to run, and went on running and running for dear life, as if he would run on in that way forever. He wanted to get away from himself—get away from the thought of what he had done. At last, when he could run no more, he stopped and stood still. It was no use. He had done it. There was no getting away from that awful deed. Then all at once he thought he heard a voice, as if it were the voice of the Lord, the Ruler of the World, saying to him: "Where is Abel, thy brother?"

Can you fancy the feelings of Cain at this moment? Can you imagine that frightened expression as he stood there staring into space, listening to those awful words? And how do you suppose he would answer? He had been brave, heretofore; he had not known before what it was to be afraid. His father and mother had admired him for his courage. They knew he could always take care of himself, and, if need be, take care of them. It seemed almost at times as if the wild animals themselves were afraid of him, so fearless he was, so daring!

But at this moment he felt that if some one were to just touch him with a finger, he would drop. As he heard those words, fear stole over him as it had stolen over his father and mother in the Garden of Eden; and he told a lie, saying: "I know not—am I my brother's keeper?" Then for a moment he was at peace. He felt himself safe. In former times it had never quite crossed his mind that he could escape from danger through a lie; but at this moment it seemed to him the easiest thing in the world. All he thought he had to do was just to deceive and he would be safe. But this feeling of security did not last long. He did not have to wait for the reply of that voice to what he had said. His heart sank within him; for he knew then that even if he had told a lie, he could not make

it as if he had not been a murderer. It was just as if something within himself spoke, as he heard a voice saying to him again: "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground."

It was an awful moment for poor Cain. At first I suppose we should have had a feeling of horror in regard to him; he had been guilty of such an awful crime; he had slain his brother! Yet now, at the moment when he heard that voice, I fancy we should have pitied him. We too might shrink from the curse which followed, as that voice continued: "And now, cursed art thou from the ground which hath opened her mouth and received thy brother's blood from thy hand; when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee its strength; a fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be in the earth."

And Cain, as he heard these words, fell to the ground. He was no longer able even to stand. There was no hope ahead for him. Everything was black and desolate and dreary; nobody to care for him; nobody to love him! He feared that even his own father and mother would cast him out. If he met his other brothers anywhere else, they would look upon him with loathing; yes, they might even turn and kill him. He felt that they would not want to have him alive on the face of the earth. He saw himself wandering everywhere, trying to hide from any one who might see him. The thought of always being obliged to hide and to shun the faces of his brothers and to live alone, an outcast, was more than he could stand, and he cried out: "My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the ground, and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth; and it shall come to pass that if any of my brothers find me, they shall slay me."

But no; the Lord did not wish that Cain should be put to death. Hence a sign was put upon Cain that he was to wear wherever he had to go, directing that no man should lay hands on him, that his life should be spared. And Cain rose up once more as bravely as

he knew how, though not the same brave man he had been before. And he went forth alone, away from his home, into another part of the country, where he might no longer have to look upon the faces of his father and mother. He knew that his deed of evil would follow him just the same. But he wanted to spare his home from the shame of his crime.

TO THE TEACHER: In this narrative we have presented to us the consequences following upon the disregard of the most elemental of all duties: The respect for human life. It kindles at once a feeling of horror for murder as a crime and gives to the young mind a keen appreciation of what "wickedness" means. It serves by this means to awaken the latent conscience of the child in leading him to pass ethical judgments on human conduct. Then too the story can also be used to emphasize the sanctity of the family tie in one's horror for the double crime of brother-murder. On the other hand the lesson involves a study in the lesson of self-control, showing to what appalling results the want of such control may lead, if one does not have a guard upon one's self. Keep also in mind the way in which the father and mother were involved in all these consequences because of their disobedience in the Garden of Eden. Show a picture of a possible "altar," so as to give some conception of what the word implies.

MEMORY VERSES: *What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.*

And now cursed art thou from the ground which hath opened her mouth and received thy brother's blood from thy hand; a fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be in the earth.

CHAPTER III.

Noah and the Flood.

It was a good many hundred years after the time when Cain had been sent as a wanderer over the face of the earth for the murder of his brother Abel. At that day there were only a few people. But now I suppose there had come to be hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of men, women and children. It may be that the Ruler of the World had made more men and women, breathing into their nostrils the Breath of Life. At any rate, there they were—no longer just one family, Adam and Eve, with their children; but hundreds of thousands, or millions, maybe, of people or families.

Perhaps it was a thousand years after Adam and Eve had been shut out of the Garden of Eden and the Sword of Flame had been placed at the gateway. But I am sorry to say that the punishment for the act of disobedience committed by those two in that beautiful Garden, had not taught its lesson to the people who came after. We should have fancied that the mere fact—which everybody must have known—in the way Adam and Eve had been punished for that crime, would tend to make the human race more careful about doing anything wicked again. But it went just the other way. Instead of becoming better as the years went on, the human race grew worse. Sadly we have to confess to you that many other awful murders were committed after what Cain had done. Many a man had been sent out as a wanderer on the face of the earth because he had slain his brother. It would almost seem as though all this wickedness grew little by little out of the wickedness of that first brother, or out of the wickedness of that first father and mother, in the Garden of Eden.

I can not begin to tell you what was going on. Instead of being kind to each other, people hated each other. Instead of peace, there was strife and war. Instead of telling the truth, they would tell lies. Instead of working and earning their daily bread like men and women, they would steal. They seemed to have no sense of honor, no sense of justice. Boys and girls when they grew up would no longer treat their fathers and mothers kindly, but leave them to hunger and starve. The people seemed to care only for the lower kinds of pleasure, such as eating and drinking and beautiful clothes. They never thought of trying to be of help to each other, or to improve themselves; and it never seems to have entered their minds that they would be punished for all this, sooner or later.

Just think what the Ruler of the World, who had made Adam and Eve and put them in the Garden of Eden, must have felt about it all. This was the human race for which he had done so much. He had given them the earth and all that was on it; he had made them strong so that they could earn their own living and be brave and good and happy. He had hoped that, after the first Fall, after that first evil act in the Garden of Eden, human beings would know better later on, and not be guilty of wickedness or disobedience again. Can we wonder that he was sad at heart? There was the beautiful Garden he had made, now all desolate, its gates closed forever, and the Flaming Sword above. Its beauty was there still; the trees and flowers and birds—everything the same, but yet strangely changed; and it seemed somehow as if a cloud hung over it, because of what had taken place there.

He had thought how, perhaps, men and women, remembering in later years the way Adam and Eve had been punished, would try to make a new Garden of Eden out in the world somewhere. And if they did so, he had thought how he would bless it and help them to try and keep it beautiful, and reward their efforts; so that while they could never go back to the first Garden, they might yet build themselves beautiful

homes and have a far greater and more beautiful garden of another kind somewhere on the earth.

Instead of this, the people were growing worse and worse, stealing from each other, murdering each other, and caring naught for what was good and true. They were spoiling the earth of its beauty; instead of making a garden of it they were injuring it and wasting what was there. As we are told, the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was growing in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. We can fancy the sorrow in the heart of the Great Ruler when at last he had to own to himself that he regretted ever having made man upon the earth. And it grieved him at his heart.

And do you want to know what he said to himself? I will tell you. These were his words: "I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the ground; both man and beast and creeping thing and fowl of the air, for it repenteth me that I have made them." It was something awful; but it had to come. The human race had to be punished, just as Adam and Eve had been punished. He looked down from the skies and saw all the men, women and children. And he made up his mind then what he would do. I almost dread to tell you what he said to himself, but I will read it to you:

"The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth; I do bring the flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life from under heaven; everything that is in the earth shall die."

Do you wonder, then, how it happens that there are any human beings left in the world nowadays, if all men, women and children were drowned at that time? Why, you see, the Lord was saying this to *one* good man called Noah. It seems that of all people then living on the earth, there was just one family, a man and his wife and his three sons and their wives, who were not really bad. All the rest of the people, the Lord had said, were unfit to live. But these eight

people he had decided to spare. He tells Noah what he is about to do, and bids him and his three sons to prepare an "ark" or big boat which shall float on the surface of the waters when the great floods should come. No others should be spared save Noah and his family.

It must have been a huge boat, that ark, which should float on the waters, because Noah had been told that it was not only to be for him and his family, but that also of every living thing of all flesh he was to bring two of every sort into the ark and keep them alive there, male and female. As it was said to Noah:

"Of the fowl after their kind and of the cattle after their kind, two of every sort shall come in unto thee to keep them alive, and take thou with thee of all food that is eaten and gather it to thee, and it shall be food for thee and for them."

I am telling, as you know, the story of Noah and the Flood.

At last, Noah was ready. He had been a long while with his sons building that ark. I suppose the people had laughed at him or despised him for what he was doing. What did they care? They went on eating and drinking and making merry in their wickedness and growing all the time worse and worse. But the judgment had gone forth; the Ruler of the World had decided, and the time had come. All the animals were there and were taken into the ark. Then Noah entered with his family and the door was shut. He was ready for what was to happen.

It began to rain. Perhaps at the outset it was just like any other rain, save that it did not stop. And the people for a while did not mind it—rather liking it for a change. But by and by they grew a little uneasy, for after it had rained a day or two, it went on raining. It rained for a whole week; and then the plains down below were all covered with water. People had to move out of their cities and go on the hill-sides, leaving their homes and wealth behind, until they began to wish that they too, like Noah, had built arks for themselves.

But it was too late. It went on raining. Day after day and week after week the water crept steadily up the hillsides. There was no more food for the people to eat, and the children were starving to death. Still the waters rose, and the rain poured steadily down, until the last hill tops and mountain tops were finally covered, and there was not a speck of land to be seen anywhere. No person was left alive save the family in the ark with Noah. It had rained forty days and forty nights so the story tells us, as it is said: "The flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased and bare up the ark and it was lifted up above the earth, and the ark went upon the face of the waters; all high mountains that were under the whole heavens were covered."

Can you fancy such a scene? One awful punishment had come for all the bad deeds of the human race since Adam and Eve had been cast out of the Garden of Eden. The waters of the heavens had washed out the whole earth clean. And it had been done by drowning all beings on the face of the earth save this one family floating alone over the waters in the ark. As it was said in the story:

"All flesh died that moved on the earth, both fowl and cattle and beast and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man; all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life; all that was in the dry land, died. And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days."

The Lord was satisfied. There had been no pleasure to him in the punishment which he had put on the human race. It was sad and sorrowful enough to him that he had to do it. As he looked out over the face of the earth, he must have felt glad that at least one family was left alive, in whom, as it is said, "there breathed the breath of the spirit of life."

When, therefore, the mountains had been covered, the rain ceased to fall. The skies cleared and the sun once more began to shine. And there was Noah wandering over the waters in the ark, waiting until they should subside and he should find dry land again.

How long he would have to wait, he did not know. He only felt sure that if he waited long enough, the time would come when they could all go forth again.

When it seemed as if he could wait no longer and he must really know what hope there was, he took a dove and let it go free from the ark in order to see whether it would find dry land, or, if not, come back to him. But Noah had been impatient. The dove went flying here and there over the surface of the waters, finding no rest for its feet, and at last it returned to the ark again, "for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. And Noah put forth his hand and drew it within the ark."

He waited another seven days; and growing most impatient, he thought he would try once more, again sending forth the dove from the ark. And what do you suppose happened? Did the dove come back now, or find dry land and stay away? No; it came back again, but in its beak it carried an olive leaf. In that way, you see, Noah found out that the waters were abating from off the earth. With a little more patience he waited another seven days, and then sent forth the same dove. I fancy by this time the dove was tired of the ark. If it did not come back now, Noah would know that, ere long, he himself might leave the ark. And it happened that the dove returned not again unto him any more. Then at last, Noah took off the covering of the ark. He had waited long enough. He looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry. The ark had rested on a mountain top. You may want to know the name of this mountain. It was called Mount Ararat.

There was the earth, quite bare where it had been covered by the waters, with just this one family and all the birds and beasts and living things within the ark. They came forth now, all of them, to people the earth again; and ere long the earth was fresh and green. Flowers once more began to bloom; trees grew up again, and the wild animals roamed once more as of old. But one dread hung over all living people. It took away their courage, this dread; until,

in order to give them heart once more, their Great Ruler made them a promise. He told them to look at the rainbow, and whenever they saw it to remember that he had made a pledge to them that never again should there be a flood covering the whole earth. Would you like to know the words which, as we are told, he used in speaking to Noah as he made this pledge? I will give them to you:

"I establish my covenant with you, and with every living creature that is with you; the fowl and cattle and every beast that is with you; of all that go out of the ark, even every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you: neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by waters of the flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth."

The human race had learned that, in one way or another, wickedness surely gets punished.

TO THE TEACHER: There should be something very impressive to the young mind, in this picture of a world so positively wicked all the way through as to deserve being utterly destroyed—as if even the beasts and birds had become infected by it all. Such a story, if properly told, should seem still further to awaken the ethical sense, in calling forth the feeling that evil conduct as such *deserves* punishment. It is well to connect the thought of bad conduct or a wicked life with the thought of punishment, implying that the two naturally belong together and that the one somehow brings the other, even if we cannot always see how it comes. It is the conception of *desert* we need to emphasize here. There are several features of the story which need to be dwelt upon because of the way they have entered into every-day language: as, for example, the Ark, the Rainbow, the Dove, Mount Ararat, etc.

MEMORY VERSE: *The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold I will destroy them with the earth; I do bring the flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life under the heavens; every thing that is in the earth shall die.*

CHAPTER IV.

The Tower of Babel.

It was a long while ago, just how long I cannot say, and over in another part of the world, after the time of the great Flood—it may have been hundreds of years later, when Noah was no longer alive—and there was again a great number of people on the earth. I suppose they still talked about the time long gone by, when the human race had been punished for all its wickedness, and the rain had come down from the skies and drowned everybody, save Noah and his family. I fancy they pointed out the mountain where they thought the ark had come to its rest. But they had no fear of any more such punishment. Now it was but a story to them, and it may be that many of the people no longer believed it.

They had begun to build cities again. They had riches once more, and they began to give themselves over just to having a good time—seeking only after pleasures, and just those kinds of pleasures which satisfy people for a moment and leave nothing behind.

They had so much wealth and they had been so successful in building their cities that they were fast being overcome with pride. Perhaps you know what that feeling means? In those days, it seems that every man somehow felt as if he were better than any other man. So now I am going to tell you of something extraordinary that took place. What put it into the people's heads I do not know. It is never quite easy to explain the strange ideas or plans which some persons have. But be that as it may, the people at that time did think up the strangest sort of a scheme. As to the sense of it all, you must decide for yourselves. But

they got it into their heads that they would build a tower. It was not to be just the ordinary kind of a tower, but something great and mighty; greater than anything which had ever been built before. It was to be high. "How high?" you ask. Why, they meant to make it go on up until it touched the skies. Possibly they did not know in those days just what the skies were, or how high it was up there. At any rate, they thought they could do it; in fact, they were sure of it.

They talked and talked a great deal about the tower, and how they would build it. At last they set to work and laid the foundations. You can be sure these foundations were solid and strong. They were not going to have their tower tumble over; it was to stay there forever. "What did they do it for?" you ask. Well, I do not quite know. It may be that they did not know themselves. People do not always have the best of reasons for the plans they have. All I can say is, they just wanted to build a tower, and it was to be something very large indeed. In fact, they wanted to see just what they could do. They had an idea that they could do almost anything, and they were quite sure that they knew almost everything. They had stopped trying to learn anything more, because they were so satisfied with themselves, thinking they knew it all, or all that ever could be known.

This tower, then, we assume, was to show how clever they were. They could look at it after it reached the skies, and think what a big thing they had done and how much superior they would show themselves to any other human beings who ever lived before them, or to any people who might come afterwards. What sort of a feeling do you call this? "Pride," you answer? Yes, that was it. These people were just *proud*. They evidently wanted, as we should say nowadays, to "show off."

You see, the world was young then. There had not been very much history, and people had not found out what they did not know. Sometimes it happens, as you are aware, that the more ignorant a person is, the more he thinks he knows. He likes to talk about himself, to

think about himself; and he likes to have other people look at him and admire him and talk about him.

These strange people lived on what was called the Plains of Shinar, away over in Asia somewhere; and they began to build their tower. Just as soon as the foundations were laid, thousands of people would come out every day to look at it; and the more they looked at it, the more esteem they felt for themselves, and the more sure they were that no people would ever be able to do anything so great or achieve anything so extraordinary as this tower was going to be. It kept on going up, higher and higher. At first it only reached to the tops of the doors of the houses; by and by it was as high as the roofs; then it went on up above the walls of the city, and soon it was higher than anything else in the country. Yet it kept on going up, and they made more brick and brought more stone and built it higher and higher, and as they watched the skies they kept wondering how long it would be before their tower would touch that great blue dome up there.

If they had been proud before they laid the foundations of that tower, they grew more and more proud every day. They spent pretty much all their time admiring themselves. I suppose if there had been any books in those days, they would have stopped reading them. Why should they read books when they "knew all about it"? What reason did they have for going to see other parts of the world, when they were so superior themselves? Yet, all the while, up went that tower; and it did almost look as if it were going to touch the skies. "What sort of a name did they give to it?" you ask. Well, I think we should have called it the "Tower of Pride," yet that was not the name they gave to it themselves.

But by and by something happened. Usually when people get too proud, something does happen. Do you think that the tower fell down? No, it stayed there—at least for awhile; just how long I do not know. But there was a fall of another kind for that Tower of Pride.

It seems that the Ruler of the World got to thinking

about it, and he did not altogether approve of what was going on down there on the Plains of Shinar. He was quite certain if the human race went on in that way they would think they knew everything and the world would come to a standstill. Now, the Great Ruler wanted the human race to go on improving, and he knew that the one great vice which would keep people from improving was Pride.

There was no other way. Those people there on the Plains of Shinar had to be taught humility; their pride must have a fall; in some way they must be brought back to their senses. I almost wonder that their Lord did not despise these people altogether and decide not to have any human beings on earth at all, if they were going to be so vain. But no; he felt pity for them because they were young and had not had much experience, and so he thought he would try another way to teach them humility.

The people had almost fancied that their tower was just about to reach the skies. It was higher than anything else in the world, and they were growing more and more supremely satisfied over it. We assume there must have been thousands of men at work there.

But one morning there was trouble. All the work came to a standstill. The Lord had decided to interfere. And what do you suppose he did? Well, it is said, you know, that people in those days all talked alike. Nowadays we have any number of languages among the races scattered throughout the world, hundreds of languages, I suppose. But according to my story, from what we are told, up to that time people talked only one language, and all men could understand each other. This may have been one reason why they thought they knew everything. But at any rate, one morning the work stopped. Thousands of men had come together to go on with the tower, when all of a sudden they found they could not understand each other. One man was talking in one language, and another was talking in another language. Just how many languages they were speaking, I do not know; but we fancy it must have been hundreds or thousands.

There they were. What could they do? One man would give a direction and the other man could not understand it. The whole plan fell to pieces. They could not talk; they could not direct each other; they could not explain to each other what they were trying to do. It was the end of that tower. As far as they were concerned, it was as if that great structure had tumbled down upon their heads. It was there, just the same as it was the day before; but they could not go on with it.

And as they tried to talk to each other and found that they could not understand what others were saying, it struck them that perhaps, after all, they did not know everything; otherwise there would not be such a wild and stupid confusion everywhere. It was an awful blow. "A blow to what?" you ask. Why, to their pride, I should say. They came to a realization that they were not so great as they thought they were; that they did not know as much as they thought they did; that they were not nearly as superior as they had fancied.

What a state of mind the people must have been in, there in that great city! They looked up at their tower and they felt ashamed. It no longer added to their pride; and they wished they could pull it down. It all seemed very childish now, the effort they had made to "show off." They wished they had never begun it. It struck them that perhaps, after all, the human race was young, and that if they were to start out and scatter over the world, they might go on improving and learning a great deal more.

They left their tower and it crumbled away. They abandoned their city, those speaking one language going one way; others speaking another language going another way. But as they departed they had quite a different look on their faces from what they had had a few years before when, in their pride, they had laid the foundations of that great building. The Tower of their Pride had fallen, and they had learned humility.

TO THE TEACHER: The keynote of this lesson could be the evil effects of vanity or pride. We are

dealing in these stories mainly with the primary sins and primary virtues. The picture has touched on one of the elemental weaknesses of human nature—over-self-esteem. Young and old alike should be made to feel a sense of humility or insignificance before the Universe and its Author. One is not to blame for a normal self-confidence in one's powers. But we can explain how it is that there is a limit beyond which confidence in self becomes a sign of weakness instead of strength. The figure of a little child defying its father could be introduced as illustrating the attitude of the people of those days in constructing their tower, as if in their presumption they felt themselves the equal or the superior of the very Ruler over All. Point out how it is that by such presumption we only make ourselves seem all the more petty or inferior from the contemptible folly of our conduct.

PART II.

THE PATRIARCHS.

CHAPTER V.

The Promise to Abram.

Now we reach a time a long while after the days when the people had tried to build their Tower of Babel and then were scattered over the earth. We are told how one of the sons of Noah, many hundreds and hundreds of years before, had gone off south to Africa. His name, as you know, was Ham; and nowadays, sometimes, the races living on that continent who have been there these thousands of years, are called the "descendants of Ham." Then there was another called Shem, and he went in another direction; while the third son, who was called Japheth, went into still a third part of the world. In this way, as you see, we sometimes hear it said how all the races of men descended from the three sons of Noah—Shem, Ham and Japheth.

I shall want to tell you a great deal about one special family. We shall have little more to say about the descendants of Ham or of Japheth. Nearly all of what we shall have to describe will be about the descendants of Shem, who lived over in Asia.

It may be that you have heard about the three famous men of those times, known as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Abraham was the grandfather of Jacob and the father of Isaac. At first his name was Abram, but it was changed by and by. Later on I will tell you why this was done.

These three men, about whom so much is told, are spoken of as "The Patriarchs." They did not live

in cities, as many of us do nowadays. Their wealth did not consist in houses and lands. They did not have farms with great wheat and corn fields everywhere about them. No, Abram's wealth consisted in flocks of sheep and herds of cattle; although he also had a great deal of silver and gold, for he was a prosperous man, and a rich one. People admired him and thought a great deal of him. But you see, with that kind of wealth, he could not live in one place or reside in a city. He had to travel about with his flocks and herds wherever he could find good pasture. And so the patriarchs lived in tents, wandering about the country from place to place, taking their riches with them wherever they had to go.

It must have been a strange sort of life; and yet I should not be surprised if they took much pleasure in it. You see, they had to live out in the open air a great deal. They could study the stars at night if they had nothing else to do; and we are told it was in those days that the science of "astronomy" was founded through such a study of the heavens.

All the people who were with Abram helping him to take care of his flocks and herds, men who had to milk the cows and those who had to look after the sheep and tend them while feeding in the pastures, all seemed, as it were, to belong to one great family, which was called the "tribe." And Abram, who owned all the wealth would be the head of the tribe or family and be the "Patriarch."

They did not dress in those days as we do now. The clothing they wore was suited to the climate there and to the kind of life they led. It may be that you would like to see how Abram looked in those days and what kind of dress he wore. We can show you a picture of the way he may have looked, because there are men even nowadays in that far away country, living in tribes, keeping flocks and herds and traveling about just in the way he lived with his family.

Now, Abram was a better man in a great many ways than the other people about him, or the other patriarchs as heads of their tribes. He was living at this time

somewhere in the center of the continent of Asia, perhaps not far from the Euphrates or Tigris rivers, which, as you know, flow into the Persian Gulf. Just precisely where it was we do not know, but it was called the land of Ur, belonging to the Chaldees.

The Ruler of the World knew all about this, of course, and how much better Abram was than the other patriarchs. And so he thought it best to have him go away into another part of Asia and found a great family of his own. I suppose this must have been pretty hard for Abram and his family. He was probably very fond of the people around him, the other tribes living with other patriarchs. And it may be that they were fond of him, too, because, while Abram was a better man than they were, he did not call himself any better or put on superior airs or show any great pride. He was a man of simple habits and good to other people. But he knew he had to obey. The command had come for him, telling him he must go. Would you like to know what the Lord said to him in bidding him leave his home and family? Well, I will read to you just what, as we are told, was said to Abram:

“Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father’s house into the land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse, and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blest.”

You see, this was not only a command, but a promise to Abram. Perhaps it was this promise which made it easier for Abram to go away into a far country and leave his kindred behind him. In spite of all the sorrow of the parting and the wish he must have felt to have taken his own kindred with him, he could still keep thinking of this glorious promise—how, in some way, through him, by and by in distant times, all the world was to be blessed. As he went on traveling, getting further and further away, knowing that he should never go back there, he could still keep murmuring those words to himself: “I will make of thee a

great nation; I will bless thee and make thy name great, and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blest."

After all, I think for this reason, Abram must have been a happy man, because we feel sure that in earlier years he had found great pleasure in being of service to others. And now he could have the pleasure of thinking of the still greater good he would be in some way, later on, to all mankind.

He had to travel over the desert, where, as you know, there was at times no pasture for his flocks or herds and no water for him or his people to drink. They would have to wait, and go on and on, all the while thinking of the land to which they were at last to come and where they were to settle down. It was to be the Land of Canaan, which we now speak of as Palestine.

I am glad to say that Abram was allowed to take his family with him, and at least one other of his kindred. His wife's name was Sarai. Later on her name was changed, as we shall see.

Besides his wife, he was permitted to take his brother's son with him, whose name was Lot. As it is told us, "Abram took Sarai and Lot, his brother's son, and all the substance that they had gathered; and they went forth to go into the Land of Canaan; and into the Land of Canaan they came"—all the while, as I have said, Abram being very rich in cattle and sheep and in silver and gold.

Lot, the nephew of Abram, was also a very rich man. He, too, had great flocks and herds and many tents. And so, you see, when they had at last settled in the land of Canaan and were living close together there was really not quite enough room for them both. And this naturally made Abram very unhappy. He did not like to part with Lot, and yet he did not know what to do, because, as it is said, "the land was not able to bear them that they might dwell together; for their substance was so great that they could not dwell together."

They tried as best they could for a while to get along. But I am sorry to say that trouble arose between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's

cattle. These men began to quarrel, and there was strife between them. I fancy that Lot and Abram by themselves might have managed it. But there was no way now to get along, inasmuch as this strife had begun, and they wanted peace.

Every little while, in spite of all they could do, they would hear of quarrels arising between the two sets of herdsmen, until Abram felt at last that they must separate. And he arranged it in a beautiful way. He was the older man, and, I suppose, had more wealth than Lot. And so he thought it right that he should give to the younger man the choice, instead of taking the choice for himself.

One rejoices to think of the way Abram got around this trouble. We can see why it was that he had been sent out by the Lord to found a great family, showing, as it does, what a really good man in many ways he must have been. He had all the power, and if he had chosen could have taken the best land and sent Lot away. But no; he was not the one to act in that kind of spirit.

At last Abram called Lot to him, and they had a quiet talk together. We can fancy them, perhaps, standing before the great tent in the cool of the evening, viewing in the distance their flocks and herds, and wondering what they should do. Then Abram spoke to Lot in these words: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen, for we are brethren." Was it not beautiful, the reason which Abram gave? I always like to remember those four words so kindly spoken by Abram. Surely it would be well worth our while to commit them to memory: "*For we are brethren.*"

It would have been bad enough if there had been strife among the men, even if they had not been related; but it seemed quite awful to Abram to have these quarrels going on between families which were all of one kindred. And Abram went on to speak again in these words: "Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will take the right; and if thou take the

right hand, then I will go to the left." Was not that bravely and manfully said?

There they were together, in the cool of the evening, with all their wealth before them, but with no suggestion of strife between the two men who "were brethren." I am afraid Lot was not quite so generous in all ways as Abram. He evidently wanted more wealth, and perhaps was a little bit jealous of the riches of his uncle. We are not told that he was willing to give the choice up; and he was very glad that these kind words had come from Abram. He knew about the country all around there, and what was the best land for his flocks and herds. He thought of the rich country down around the river Jordan, not far away from the great cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, how the land was well watered there. And so Lot said to Abram, "I will take the Plain of Jordan." And Abram, on the other hand, dwelt further north in the Land of Canaan.

You can well suppose that this conduct on the part of Abram pleased the Ruler of the World very much, indeed, and made him all the more sure that he was wise in singling out Abram in this way to be the founder of a great family. And therefore, in order to satisfy Abram and make him happy, he repeated his promise to him, although it had certainly not been forgotten. And this was what he said to him: "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy family forever. Arise, walk through the land to the length of it and in the breadth of it; for unto thee will I give it."

And Abram, you can be sure, felt very happy. This land, as we have said, we think of now as Palestine. In this connection it may be that you would like to have me tell you another story of what took place later on at one time between Abram and Lot. You see, as you remember, Lot had chosen the rich and well watered country down along the river Jordan. He had chosen what he most wanted, and felt satisfied with his choice. But sometimes, when people take just what

they want and think they have got the best of everything in their choice, they find themselves a little mistaken. It may be that something happens to make them regret having acted quite so selfishly. I am not quite sure how Lot felt, but I know there was trouble by and by.

We told you that down there, not far away from the river Jordan, where Lot had gone, were the two great cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. These cities were very rich and had kings over them. But just because of these riches, other kings began to be jealous of all the wealth there. And by and by these other kings decided they would make war on Sodom and Gomorrah, going with their armies and seizing the wealth of those two cities. We are certain that if this happened there would be trouble for Lot and his family, who was living with all his flocks and herds not far away. These kings might turn aside and carry a good deal of Lot's wealth away with them, besides what they stole from the great cities they would attack.

And all this really took place. The king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah went out with their armies and set themselves in battle array in order to defend their cities. But it did no good. Their armies were not strong enough. They were defeated, and they had to fly. Then what do you suppose happened?

It seems that round about those cities there were a number of "slime pits," as they were called, and these unlucky kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fell in there, while the rest of the people fled to the mountains. And the victorious kings went into the cities with their army and carried off the food and the wealth, at the same time seizing Lot and carrying him off with them. By this time I suspect that Lot wished he had not chosen the Plain of Jordan, even if it was a rich and well watered country. He must have wished that he had shown a more generous spirit, like that shown by Abram. But be that as it may, it was too late. He had been captured.

You will remember that Abram was living further north, in Canaan, with his flocks and herds. And one

of the people who had escaped, came and told him what had happened to Lot and to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abram, I suppose, did not care very much about those two cities, because he knew the people there were very wicked. But he loved his brother's son, and so he wanted to rescue Lot, who had been made a captive. He gathered together the men around him, leaving just a few behind to take care of the cattle and sheep, going with the rest of them—over three hundred in number. He met the enemy, battled with them and came out victorious over those other kings, setting free once more those kings of Sodom and Gomorrah—and, most of all, bringing back with him his brother's son, Lot, along with the goods and the other members of the family who had been carried away.

Anyone would feel perfectly sure that the kings of those two cities would have been very grateful to Abram for what he had done, even if they were not very good men. He had saved their lives at the risk of his own and rescued their cities. They, in return for this great deed, offered him one-tenth of all the wealth he had captured. Abram was a rich man already, although I fancy he would have been glad to have all this wealth besides. But he had not done this for the sake of getting any more money or flocks or herds. He had done it for the sake of his nephew, Lot, and so he did not want pay for it. He was not that kind of a man. He actually refused to accept the wealth that was offered him, saying in reply: "I will not take a thread nor a shoelatchet nor aught that is thine, lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abram rich: save only that which the young men have eaten and the portion of the men which went with me."

Then Lot went back with his flocks and herds to the Plain of Jordan, while Abram returned north again to his home in Canaan. He had done a good and generous deed and thought no more about it.

In this way, you see, we realize more and more why it was that Abram had been chosen out and received the promise of the Land of Canaan.

TO THE TEACHER: Dwell a good deal on the generous spirit of Abram. Write on the blackboard the words, "And they were brethren." Fix the names of the three patriarchs definitely in the minds of the children. Expand a little on the life of the patriarchs. Show a picture of an Arab sheik, as giving a suggestion of how Abram looked. Raise the question whether Lot should have so readily accepted the choice offered him by Abram. Show a picture of the Plain of Jordan. Point out how Lot overreached himself in the choice he made, while the conduct of Abram in the second part of the chapter should be brought forward as a story of doing a good deed for its own sake.

MEMORY VERSES: *I will make of thee a great nation; I will bless thee and make thy name great, and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blest.*

Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between thee and me, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen, for we are brethren.

I will not take a thread nor a latchet nor aught that is thine, lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abram rich.

CHAPTER VI.

The Casting Out of Hagar.

We have said to you that Abram was a happy man, partly for the reason that he had been of service to others, and partly because of the promise that, somehow, his family was to be a blessing to the world. But, as you know, very few people are altogether happy. No man has quite all that he wants, or all that he would like to have. Usually something will trouble him, or there may be some one thing he may long for very much, and yet it never seems to come to him.

And this was true of Abram. He had a wife and home and great riches in gold and silver and in flocks and herds. He had friends enough all around him, and more and more the whole tribe must have loved him, and showed devotion to him. He went on growing richer and richer, getting more silver and gold and having greater flocks and herds—more at times, it seemed, than he knew just what to do with. And yet I fancy he would have been willing to have given away one-half of all he had, if just one other blessing might come to him.

He was not quite happy, because, in spite of all this wealth and all those friends, he was an old man, and as yet had no children. The other people around him had little ones growing up into young manhood and young womanhood; but there was Abram, with no little ones as yet to call him father.

Now, I must tell you something that will seem very strange, indeed, and hard for us nowadays to understand. But we must not forget that the world was very different thousands of years ago; and they had customs then which we should not like to have now,

and which we would not even allow to exist. But, you see, in those far away times, there were fewer people in the world than now, and it was quite usual in those days for a wealthy man to have more than one wife.

I can see that this surprises you, and we do not even like to think of it. But we must remember that this was a long time ago, and I suppose in those days they had not learned better. They had not found out, as we have, that in the only true kind of family there can never be any more than one husband and one wife. Yet as Abram was a wealthy man, he did have more than one wife. The other one was called Hagar, and she was a servant, or "bondwoman," as the name went, to the first wife, Sarai.

And for a long, long while Sarai had no children. She, too, therefore, was quite unhappy—more so, perhaps, than Abram. But by and by a little son came to the wife Hagar. This of course, pleased Abram very much. For he knew that by and by a child would lisp the word "father" to him.

But while Abram was happy, and likewise Hagar, in the fact that now at last there was a child in that home, we cannot help but think that one member of that family must have been very much troubled. It would be the other wife, Sarai; and it would be hard for us to blame her because of her trouble of mind. She, too, wanted children, like Hagar, and wanted that Abram should love her also for the sake of the children she might bring to him. Then, too, I am very much afraid that Hagar began to feel proud over the fact that she had a child; and it may be that she boasted a little to Sarai in her pride. This must have made the other wife feel very unhappy, indeed. It is never at all pleasant to have anyone boast over us—and least of all is it a pleasure when we know that we may not be to blame.

For this reason we feel pretty sure there would be trouble in that family; that all was not going to be perfect peace for the old father Abram. He was glad enough to have the little child, even though his first wife, Sarai, was not its mother. And so, you see, when people are unhappy, as Sarai was, unless they have a

great deal of control over themselves they may lose their temper. By and by she lost hers and became very angry with Hagar, and even abused her.

But for Sarai's sake, I am glad to say that a child at last came to her, too. Then she was very happy and proud, indeed. She felt perfectly sure now that Abram would care as much, or more, for her than he had for the other wife, Hagar. And they called this little boy Isaac.

One would suppose now, when the family was complete, and each wife had a little child, that all would go on happily again, and there would be no more trouble. The father himself was surely more than content.

It was about this time, as you may know, that Abram's name was changed. Now that he had children he could see how it was that he would have a great family, and how, through his family, the world might be blessed. And so, we are told, the Lord changed his name from Abram to Abraham, meaning the "father of many nations." Hereafter, therefore, we shall speak of this father by his other name.

For a little while, at any rate, the whole family were happy enough. There were the two wives, Sarai and Hagar, and the happy father, Abraham, with his two little sons. About this time, I must tell you, the Lord had also changed the name of Sarai into Sarah, meaning "princess," and so we shall speak of her hereafter by this other name of Sarah.

But by and by trouble came into the family. It had been started long before, when Sarah had no children, and she had been angry with Hagar and had felt so much jealousy when Hagar had been inclined to boast about being the only one who had a child. But now that Sarah was a mother and had a little one of her own, she began to look down upon Hagar, and the bad feelings which had commenced some years before came back and grew worse and worse.

One cannot help feeling very sorry about this. It shows how bad it is that such feelings should ever start at all; for, once they have begun, it is pretty sure they will return again. Yet both of them were to blame.

One had been boastful and the other had been jealous. The bad feeling between the two mothers grew worse and worse, and Abraham scarcely knew what to do. Sarah was his first wife, and Hagar had been only a bondwoman; hence he felt it was his duty to uphold his first wife, Sarah, and her child.

It must have been a very unhappy time for the poor old father. Furthermore, and what seems even worse, the two children began to quarrel between themselves. Then, too, one day Sarah saw the child of Hagar mocking her. This was more than she could stand. She made up her mind that she would not live in the same house with Hagar and her child. She went at once to Abraham and told him that if she was to remain with him as his wife, he would have to cast out Hagar and her child. Poor old Abraham saw the end of it all, as she said: "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac."

The children, of course, were so very young—perhaps not more than three or four years old—that they did not know what all this was about. But there was nothing else for Abraham to do. He was obliged to act according to the wishes of his first wife, Sarah, although it grieved him to the very heart; for Hagar and her child were also very dear to him.

Nowadays all this could not happen. It was, you see, because of that sad custom in those days of a man having more than one wife. It may be that this was the way by which people came to see the mistakes of that custom and to give it up, and to understand that the only true home was that in which there was only one husband and one wife. I can fancy that Abraham then and there began to understand more about the true kind of home and the happiness such as we know of nowadays.

But at that time it seemed there was only one thing for the father to do. Abraham had to cast out Hagar and her child, whose name was Ishmael. As we are told, he rose up early in the morning and took some

bread and a bottle of water and gave it unto Hagar and to the child, and sent them away. And so they departed, the mother and her child, not knowing where they would go. It may be for a time that Hagar did not much care, as long as she had her precious boy with her. She loved him so much that she may have felt that all would come out right somehow.

By and by the water in the bottle was all gone. The food that had been given her was all eaten up, and nothing was left, and she did not know what to do. Perhaps, in her despair, she had not made any effort to provide for herself and child. Perhaps she had gone away angry and thought nothing about it. Now, at last, it seemed as if there was no hope for either of them. It looked to her as if there was only death for the child, and she must die with it. We can imagine her feelings—her anger against Abraham and Sarah, struggling with her love for her child.

And what do you suppose she did? She knew she could not stay there and see her little boy starve to death. And so she put him under a tree where it was cool in the shade, and then she went a little distance away to lie down and cry, saying in her agony of spirit, "Let me not look upon the death of my child!" Then, as we are told, she lifted up her voice and wept.

I suppose it never crossed the mind of Abraham that anything of this kind would happen. He had probably taken it for granted that some other family would look after Hagar and her child, because in those days people were very hospitable in many ways with strangers. All this might not have happened, perhaps, if Hagar had been only more thoughtful. You see, she had been angry, and now she was getting her punishment.

At the same time, the Ruler of the World knew all that was taking place. He had pity on Hagar. He felt sorry for her because she had been cast out, and he was not going to let her be punished too far. And so he came to speak with Hagar, and this is what he said, as we are told: "What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not. Arise; lift up the lad." It may be, in her grief, she

did not know where the words came from. Perhaps she heard them all inside of herself. But at any rate she dried her tears and arose. The child was there, not very far away. She looked at it with a heart full of love; and then what do you suppose she saw? Why, just around on the other side of the tree, where she had not looked, was a well of water—all that she wanted, and more besides—cool, precious, sparkling water, to drink for herself and child, Ishmael. It was a pity she had not looked around that side of the tree at first! Instead of that, she had gone away to cry.

At any rate, now she was happy at last. At once she rushed to the well and drew water and brought it to her little gasping boy to drink. And afterwards all went very well with Hagar and Ishmael. They found a home elsewhere. It may be that Abraham had arranged it himself in this way. The boy grew up to manhood, and by and by he, too, founded another great family that lived in another part of the world. But in our story we do not hear much more about him or his mother, Hagar. And so we go back to Abraham and Sarah; and we shall see what happened to their little boy, Isaac.

TO THE TEACHER: Do not enter upon a discussion of the question as to whether Abram did right in casting out Hagar. Treat it as something that had to be done, according to the customs of the time. Have quite a little to say concerning the evil involved in bad words or strife, and what comes of it all. Point out that the punishment would not have fallen upon Hagar if she had shown the right kind of sentiment all along. Raise the query, What kind of feeling did she have for Sarah? Dwell for a time on this. Talk of the evils of boasting. Show also the bad conduct of the boy Ishmael. Do not overlook, however, the true motherly tenderness of Hagar. Fix clearly in the minds of the pupils the account which is given of the changing of the names of Abram and Sarah. Show a picture of Hagar departing with Ishmael.

MEMORY VERSE: *What ailith thee, Hagar? Fear not. Arise; lift up the lad.*

CHAPTER VII.

The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

I must turn aside a little now and tell you of something dreadful that happened in those early days. It is positively frightful, even to think of it, and it was connected with those two great cities which I have already mentioned, Sodom and Gomorrah.

You may have heard of the names of those two cities before, because for thousands of years they have been talked about, owing to what took place there; also because they stood for all that was thoroughly bad or wicked.

As you remember, the Lord had promised there should never be a flood again to drown the earth. But he did not mean by this that wickedness should not get punished, and sometimes in a most awful way. I shall have to own that, even after the Flood, and after what took place on the Plains of Shinar, where the people were trying to build their Tower of Babel, there was still a great deal of evil in the world. Noah had been a good man, and I suppose he had done his very best to bring up his boys in the right way. But those boys may not have been altogether good, and they may have done wrong now and then. And then, perhaps, when they grew up and had children of their own, these children did still more wrong.

And so it went on, and there was a great deal of bad conduct among men. But of all the places in the world none were quite so bad, we are told, as Sodom and Gomorrah, down there not far away from where Lot had chosen his home on the Plain of Jordan. All of the wickedness I have described to you as having existed on the earth before the time of the Flood, had come back

again in those two cities. The people there, were mean and selfish and bad in every possible way. It would seem as if there was nothing whatever of good left in Sodom and Gomorrah. Evidently the time had come when another punishment had to fall on some of the people in the world, in order to make them still remember that the human race was to stand for what was right and keep away from evil. At any rate, we are told that the Ruler of the World had decided that Sodom and Gomorrah should be destroyed.

But there was Abraham still living in his good old age not far away over in Canaan. And the Lord thought it well, therefore, that Abraham should be told of what was to happen; and so he sent three messengers of his to tell the old patriarch about it. And there sat Abraham in front of his tent in the heat of the day. The tent had been placed near some great, huge trees in the plains of Mamre. And as he sat there in the shade the messengers arrived. Of course, Abraham did not know that these men were messengers from the Great Ruler, and not like ordinary men. Thinking they were strangers, and wanting to be kind to them, he arose at once and stepped forward to meet them, saying: "Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet and rest yourselves under the tree; and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that, ye shall pass on; forasmuch are ye come to me."

You see, the people in those days did not wear shoes as we do at the present time, but a kind of slipper or sandal, just covering the sole of the foot; and it was usual, therefore, for them to wash their feet in the same way that we nowadays wash our hands, and perhaps just as often. And they said to Abraham: "So do, as thou hast said."

He went in at once to his wife Sarah, in a great hurry, eager to show his hospitality to the three strangers, because he wanted to act in the same kindness of heart which he had always shown in past times. And he said quickly to Sarah, his wife: "Make ready at once three measures of fine meal, knead it and make cakes." Then

he ran to the herd and brought a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a servant in order that it should be dressed. As soon as it was ready he took butter and milk and the food and set it before them, and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat. Then, when they had taken their meal and rose up to go away, Abraham walked along with them for a while.

At last, somehow, it became known to him who they were—that they were really messengers from the Ruler of the World, and not just ordinary men. They had come especially to tell him about what was going to happen to Sodom and Gomorrah.

Then Abraham was very glad, indeed, that he had done his best to entertain these three guests, although he had done it not knowing they were messengers from the Lord. And this is why, as you learn, sometimes we speak of “entertaining angels unawares,” because that is what had been done by Abraham. In those days such “messengers” were spoken of as “angels.”

They began to tell Abraham what was going to happen, talking about the awful wickedness of those two cities and how they must be destroyed. This made the old man very unhappy. He must have known about the wickedness going on there. Nevertheless he had a tender heart; he still hoped they might do better. He did not like to think that all those people would have to suffer in that way. He had an idea that perhaps there were quite a number of good people in Sodom and Gomorrah, and it struck him as pretty hard that the good should perish with the bad. So Abraham turned to the messengers and said: “Wilt thou consume the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city; wilt thou consume and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? Far be it from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked; shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”

You see, Abraham knew now that he was really talking with the Great Ruler, and thought that if there were fifty people in all those great cities, those cities ought to be spared on their account. Then, too, I think

down in his heart he wanted to try to save the other people, hoping that they would repent and become better by and by. He was pleading, therefore, with the Lord Over All, and trying to save those wicked people from the awful punishment that was coming upon them.

As the Lord heard him, he turned and said, speaking through the messengers, we assume: "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous, then I will spare all the place for their sake." Then at first Abraham was very happy. He felt sure there must be at least fifty good people in that city. And he was about to turn back, when suddenly he grew a little anxious, and got to thinking about the awful wickedness which he had been told was there. It came to his mind that, perchance, there were not fifty, but a few less? Then, of course, the whole city might be destroyed, the good along with the evil. The thought of that was too much for him, and so he spoke once more, saying: "Behold, now I have taken it upon me to speak unto the Lord; and I am but dust and ashes" Abraham was a very modest man, as I have told you all along. He had never been proud or much given to talking about himself, or to showing how important a person he was; and so he goes on to say: "Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous, wilt thou destroy all the city for the lack of five?" Abraham felt that the Ruler of the World would be merciful, and take pity on the forty-five, and he expected the answer which came: "I will not destroy it if I find therein forty-and-five." This must have satisfied Abraham, and we can see him turning around to go back to his tent, while the messengers walked toward Sodom and Gomorrah.

But he had not gone far when it struck him that forty-five were many people, and the wickedness of those cities came to him again. He turned quickly and ran after the messengers, and said: "Peradventure there shall be forty found there?" and the messengers smiled as they said: "We will not do it for the forty's sake."

By this time Abraham thought he might as well go

on and plead some more, instead of returning home. Even forty, he feared, would make a good many people in a city so bad as that; and he grew more and more doubtful whether forty good people could be found in Sodom and Gomorrah. And so he says humbly: "Oh, let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Peradventure there shall be thirty found there?" Again the messengers smiled as they said: "We will not do it if we find thirty there." It would almost seem as if Abraham would stop now, he had been so modest in his pleading; but his heart was sore, thinking of the awful doom to fall upon those cities. He could not get over the terrible punishment which would strike them; and so he makes bold to plead further, and he says: "Behold, now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: peradventure there shall be twenty found there?" and the messengers answered: "It shall not be destroyed even for the twenty's sake." But Abraham would not desist. He was going to get all he could now for the poor cities, and so he said once more: "Oh, let not the Lord be angry: peradventure ten shall be found there?" And the reply came: "I will not destroy it for the ten's sake."

This was all that Abraham could ask. Down in his heart he felt pretty sure that in such two great cities there must be ten good people. Then, too, I fancy it came over him that if there were not at least ten good people in all that multitude, the punishment would be deserved. He gave up any further pleading, therefore, and returned to his tent, and the messengers went on their way to the two cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Now, you remember, as I have said, that Lot and all his family and tribe and his herdsmen were living near those cities on the Plain of Jordan, and he also had a dwelling place in one of those cities; and when the messengers arrived there they knew perfectly well that there were no good people left there at all save just this one man Lot and his wife. They had known this even when they had answered the pleadings of Abraham.

The messengers sought out Lot in his home there in

the city and said to him: "Hast thou here any besides? Sons-in-law, and thy sons and daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place. The Lord hath sent us to destroy it." Then Lot felt most unhappy. He remembered what had happened before, when the kings had come and captured those two cities and carried him off with his flocks and herds. And it seemed to him now that he was getting much the worst of it for having chosen the Plain of Jordan. Once more it looked to him as though he were going to be punished for having been so quick in taking his own choice. But there was no help. It was too late to repent. Perhaps he said to himself: "I wish I had not done it; I wish I had not chosen the Plain of Jordan."

But he went and spoke to his sons-in-law and their wives, and said to them these awful words: "Up; get you out of this place, for the Lord will destroy the city." I fear the sons-in-law had staid too long in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot himself was still a man of good character and knew how to obey; but those sons had fallen into the bad ways of the people there. They, too, I suppose, had been wicked; and so when they heard his words they smiled as if their father were mocking them. Not one of those sons would go. It was very evident that there were not ten righteous men living in Sodom and Gomorrah.

The messengers said now to Lot: "Arise: take thy wife and thy two daughters, which are here, lest thou be consumed in the punishment of the city." And as Lot heard the words he started to go. Then he stopped, for he hated to leave everything behind him. He was not so quick to obey as Abraham. And yet, because he had really done no wrong and had always been a good man, the Great Ruler was determined to save him and his two daughters and his wife. And so the messengers caught hold of him by the shoulders and took the hands of his wife and two daughters and led them forth. They yielded and followed for a time submissively, until they were safely out of the city. The messengers went with them a short distance to make

sure that they would not turn back and thus lose their lives.

One cannot help thinking how differently Abraham would have acted; how promptly he would have obeyed those messengers. There would not have been any need for them to go out with him lest he should turn back. But they were very anxious to save Lot and his wife and two daughters, and so they went with them as far as the Lord would permit them to go. And the messengers said to Lot: "Escape now for thy life; look not behind thee; neither stay thou in all the plain. Escape to the mountains lest thou be consumed."

Now, what do you suppose Lot did? Start right off at once obediently to what the messengers had said? No; Lot was rather a timid man, not bold and prompt like Abraham. He was good at heart and always meant to do right; and, as a rule, with some exceptions, was a good man. And so the Ruler of the World did not want to punish him as he was going to punish the other people in those cities. But, as we see, there was something weak in the character of Lot, which had been there all along. And we are rather glad for this reason that he was not to be the founder of a great family like Abraham. Lot, instead of moving on at once to the mountain, began to plead with the messengers, asking that he might be spared from doing this; and this is what he said to them: "Behold now thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast showed unto me in saving my life; if I escape to the mountains, evil will overcome me and I shall die; there is another city not far away: may I not go to it? Oh, let me escape thither and my soul shall live." And the Lord took pity on Lot, seeing the weaker side of his character, and said to him: "I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city of which thou hast spoken. Haste thee; escape thither, for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither."

Hence Lot fled away with his wife and two daughters to this other city, which was called Zoar. Then

came the awful event which had been threatened as a punishment upon Sodom and Gomorrah.

It began to rain. The rain this time was not like that at the time of the Flood. It was not cold water falling upon the earth, drowning it little by little. Rather, it was hot fire from the heavens—brimstone and fire coming down steadily upon Sodom and Gomorrah from the skies. And it went on raining brimstone and fire hour after hour, until the two whole cities were covered with it, and all the people in them were destroyed, and the houses and palaces and homes and market places were burned down, and everything was covered with the fire and brimstone. Nothing was left—not even a sign,—so that no one would know that any cities had ever been there.

But sad to say, something very painful happened to the family of Lot during this awful calamity. One cannot help feeling that some sort of punishment would be visited on them for their hesitation in not being ready at once to obey.

It seems, as we are told, that Lot's wife, as they went along, got to thinking more and more about their home in one of those cities, and how much they were giving up by leaving it; and then I fancy she might have thought that, perhaps, after all, the awful destruction would not come and that they were foolish for being so afraid. How did she know that wickedness gets punished in this way? Had not those cities gone on for a long time, the people doing just as they pleased, and nothing bad had happened to them? And, as she got to thinking in this way, she began to linger behind.

The others were moving very fast, walking or running, to escape to the city of Zoar, and they did not notice that she was not with them until it was too late. She had turned around and looked back, then stood still, hesitating whether to return, or to run on again with the others. And as she stood there, the rain of fire and brimstone fell down upon her, covering her all over, so that her body remained like a pillar of salt.

When Lot and his daughters escaped to the city of

Zoar, they found, to their sorrow, that the wife and mother was not there with them. It was too late for them to do anything. Nothing was to be done, for they knew she must have perished.

And all the while there was Abraham over in his tent, waiting to see what would happen, hoping that his plea had saved the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. It is said that early in the morning of the next day he arose and looked out far away to where those cities had been; and you know what he saw. As we are told: "Lo, the smoke of the land went up as the smoke of a furnace."

And that was the end of those two wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

TO THE TEACHER: Make this a theme suggestive of the awfulness of wickedness as such, and how of itself it deserves punishment. Stir a feeling of horror in regard to it, as if somehow and sometime it *must* meet with punishment. In a vague way, hint at this as a law of history, or of the very nature of things—although not saying it in precisely these terms or trying to explain the process. Touch again upon the troubles of Lot. Make a good deal of the terrible mistake of Lot's wife in not doing *exactly* what was commanded. Point out the danger of wanting to do what is right and what is wrong at the same time, or of not being obedient *at heart*. Dwell upon the beautiful picture of hospitality in the beginning of the story. Make much of the pleading of Abraham, because of the way it has gone into the common speech of the world. Show pictures of the Dead Sea, as the supposed site of Sodom and Gomorrah. Put on the blackboard the terms or expressions: "Look not behind thee" and "Entertaining angels unawares."

MEMORY VERSES: *Wilt thou consume the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city; wilt thou consume and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? Far be it from thee to do after this manner, to consume the righteous with the wicked. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*

CHAPTER VIII.

Abraham Tested.

You must learn a little now about the boy Isaac, the child of Abraham and his wife, Sarah. As Ishmael had gone away with the other wife, Hagar, this child, you see, was all the dearer to Abraham. He kept thinking what a great, strong man the boy would become when grown up, and how he could depend upon him to take his place and be the head of the tribe and receive all his wealth when he should die. I fancy he cared more for this boy than for all his flocks and herds and silver and gold taken together. Probably he would rather have lost them all—money and flocks and herds—and have nothing left, than to have lost this boy Isaac.

Abraham had been quite an old man when Isaac was born. He did not expect, therefore, to have any other children; hence his whole heart was set on this boy. He liked to go wherever the child went, and play with him and educate him in every possible way. It was plain that he loved his child much more than he had ever loved himself, because, as we have said all along, Abraham was not a selfish man.

All the while, as we are told, the Ruler of the World had been watching over Abraham and his family, thinking how this man might be the father of many nations, and how all the world should be blessed through this man's family. And he decided to put Abraham to a test. You know what that means—being put to a test. It comes pretty hard, sometimes; and any number of people have failed who have been put to a test. They may have been looked upon as good and true and strong and brave. They may have thought that

way of themselves, never doubting that they would do what was told them, and would stand up always for what was right. But, then, when the test came, and the trial was before them, they would break down altogether, because they were not as strong as they thought they were; they had been weak and did not know it. This, of course, would be an awful blow to them and to all who knew them. It would almost seem as if Abraham, being an old man now, had been put to enough trials and that he should have had peace for the rest of his days.

But no; the Lord Over All was determined to put him to one more severe test; and it was the most awful one that could be thought of. It was to be decided whether Abraham would obey, even if he was commanded to give up his darling boy, Isaac. And so one day the Great Ruler spoke to him and said: "Abraham!" and he answered obediently, "Here am I." Then came the awful words—think how they must have struck on the father's heart—"Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Mōriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

You know what this meant. You remember we described the altars at the time when Adam and Eve were bringing up their sons, Cain and Abel; and you recollect how Cain and Abel made their offerings on an altar. It meant, you see, sacrifice—sacrificing life. Usually it was the life of some tender young animal. But now Abraham was called upon to offer up the life of his own son—his only child—in obedience to the Lord's command. Can you think of any severer test? Was it not something awful for poor old Abraham? He had waited so many long years for this child—it was his last hope—in order that he might have a family to come after him. If this boy were to be taken away, he felt sure he would go down in sorrow to his grave.

It would not have surprised us much if Abraham, in his old age, had refused, and said No. It may be

we should have almost forgiven him, because of his great love for his only son, Isaac. But far back in his younger days Abraham had begun by learning how to obey. When he had been told to arise and leave the land of the Chaldees, he started out into an unknown country without a question, and started *at once*. It had been his practice all his life to obey rules and commands.

And now, therefore, in spite of the anguish in his heart, he did not wait. I suppose from this moment all the joy of life went out for him; probably he never expected to have any happiness again for the rest of his days. But there was one thing he was going to do, anguish or no anguish: He was going to obey.

Early in the morning he took two of his young men with him, and Isaac, his son; and he prepared the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up and went to the place of which the Great Ruler had told him. It was quite a long distance from where he lived to this other land, at that time, two or three days' journey. This made it seem all the harder and made the test much worse. Many persons can obey if they can do at once what has been told them; but when they must wait quite a while, and thus have time to think it over, then it is another matter.

And all this while, throughout all the weary journey, Abraham must have been thinking deeply—thinking of his only child, whom he was to give up. I am sure he could not have slept one moment, day or night, while on that journey. The temptation must have been very severe for him to change his mind and go back again. But the habit he had formed of always obeying, staid with him now. Long and weary as the journey was, he did not falter. On he went, with his boy, until he came at last to the land of Moriah. When all was ready, Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it upon Isaac, his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife; and they went both of them together.

As yet the boy knew nothing of what was to happen. He had been educated to obey in the same way

as his father, Abraham. He did not even ask any questions, but followed on faithfully during those several days in which they journeyed. But now, when everything was in readiness, he turned to his father and said: "My father?" And the father said: "Here am I, my son." And the boy said: "Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" And Abraham said: "The Lord will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." And so they went, both of them, to the place together. And Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac, his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. All this time the boy said never a word. He did not know what was to be done. He asked no more questions, but quietly submitted to whatever Abraham was doing, with a full trust in his heart.

The moment had arrived. The sacrifice was to be made. Abraham was ready for the test—to stretch forth his hand grasping the knife, and slay his son. Then the Ruler of the World knew that this man could be trusted, and could obey, that one man at least was willing to give up, and not always wanting to have his own way.

As Abraham was just about to strike with his knife, he heard a voice speaking to him, saying, "Abraham!" And he answered, "Here am I." And the voice continued: "Lay not thine hand upon the lad; neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou art willing to obey my voice, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son."

Then Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and there was a ram near by, caught in a thicket by his horns. He felt that he was called upon to make a burnt offering of some kind on the altar, and so he went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

Once more, then, came the promise which Abraham had received in his younger days. Now he knew what it meant. And the voice of the Great Ruler said to him again: "Because thou hast done this thing and

hast been willing to give up thy son, thine only son; remember that in blessing, I will bless thee. In thee and thy family shall all the nations of the earth be blest."

And so Abraham, with a glad heart, took his boy and went back home again, happy that his son was spared and that he had shown courage and fulfilled his duty.

TO THE TEACHER: This is a most important lesson, and yet one which may be found very difficult to handle in just the most suitable way. You wish to make the children feel that Abraham did right in obeying, and yet not to let them feel that human sacrifice can possibly be right in itself. In a vague way, however, you can suggest that one's duty stands even above father or mother love and must always come first. If the questions should come as to why Sarah was not also consulted, the answer may be given that it was not the custom in those days for mothers to have the same position of authority in the family as at the present time. Speak of it all as belonging to a far, far away world. Discuss what a "test" means, and show how people are constantly being tested in small things without knowing it. Dwell much on the obedient spirit of Abraham, this great man who had had so much power and was so free to do as he pleased.. Point out the gentle spirit of Isaac and his trust in his father. Emphasize the promptitude of Abraham's obedience.

MEMORY VERSES: *Lay not thine hand upon the lad; neither do thou anything to him; for now I know that thou art willing to obey my voice, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son.*

Because thou hast done this thing and hast been willing to give up thy son, thine only son, remember that in blessing I will bless thee. In thee and thy family shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

CHAPTER IX.

The Choice of a Family Tomb.

By this time, as you will see, Abraham and Sarah had become very old. And in those days, according to the stories that have come down to us, people used to live a good deal longer than they do at the present time. Abraham and Sarah were, both of them, as we are told, over a hundred years old. And now, just as the boy Isaac was growing up into young manhood, his mother died at the age of one hundred and twenty-seven.

We can hardly realize all this nowadays. We are certain that Abraham was very sad over the loss of his wife, and must have shed many tears. It came very hard for him to part with her in his old age, although it was not quite so great a blow to him now, because he had a boy, Isaac; and he remembered the promise that had been made to him, how, through him and his family, some time in the future all the world was to be blessed.

The occasion had come for him to choose a family tomb or burying place. Up to the present it would seem as if he had thought nothing about it. If he had been back in his old home in the land of the Chaldees, where he had been born, it would have been easy enough to have found a suitable tomb for his family.

But, you see, here he was, alone with his flocks and herds and the people around him—the herdsmen and their families—but, for the most part, among strangers who had been living in Canaan long before he had come there. It was necessary, therefore, that

he should go to them and arrange to have them allow him a burial place in their land. And he addressed them in these words: "I am a stranger and a sojourner near you; give me possession of a burying place with you that I may bury my dead."

You notice, Abraham was inclined always to have very modest manners. He always spoke humbly, as you remember. He did not put himself forward or talk boastfully, or act as if he had a right there, because he was a man of great wealth. He went to these people in a simple manner, therefore, and told them his need, asking them that they would grant his request. I suppose it was this way that Abraham had which caused him to be so successful and prosperous there, and led him to make so few enemies. It was plain that the people among whom he was a stranger thought very highly of him, because this is what they said in reply: "Hear us now; thou art a mighty prince among us; in the choice of our sepulchres, bury thy dead; none of us hath withheld from thee his sepulchre; take the one thou desirest."

Certainly this must have pleased Abraham very much, that these people among whom he had been a stranger should speak so kindly to him; and he must have been more than glad that he had always been modest and humble in his conduct towards them during all the years he had lived there. It must have been a great happiness to him in this bereavement, to know that he had friends all around him who felt kindly toward him.

He thought carefully over the matter for a while as to just where he would like to have a sepulchre for his family, in which he would lay the body of his wife Sarah away. It was a very important matter to him, because now he thought of his family in future times, and how the place he might choose would become the family tomb. At last he made up his mind and said to the people: "If it be your mind that I should bury my dead in this land, then hear me and entreat for me to Ephron, the son of Zohar, that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which is in the end of his field; for

the full price let him give it to me in the midst of you for a possession of a burying place."

And so they went to Ephron and told him the desire of Abraham; how this prince and stranger amongst them desired the cave of Machpelah in the field belonging to him. It may be that Ephron had wished to keep this cave for himself as a tomb for his own family. But he was generous about it, and was quite willing to give it up. A large number of people had come together and were assembled at the gates of one of their cities in Canaan waiting to hear the reply which he would make to Abraham. And this is what he said to him: 'Nay, hearken unto me. The field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it to thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it to thee; bury thy dead.'

Then, as we are told, Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land. He felt very much pleased, indeed, over the kindness on the part of Ephron. He wanted somehow to show his gratitude—at least to pay something for the land which was given to him. And so he said to Ephron: "If thou wilt, pray thee hear me: I will give the price of the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there."

I fancy that Ephron would rather have given the land outright to Abraham, and not received any money for it at all. But he saw that Abraham wanted to pay for it, and would feel happier if allowed to do so. The money was nothing to him, as he had wealth enough already; but he was going to act in the same spirit of kindness with which he had begun, and so he said to Abraham: "My Lord, hearken unto me: a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver—what is that betwixt me and thee? Bury, therefore, thy dead."

This made it all right, and everything was satisfactory between the two men. And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron, and he weighed out the silver which had been named to him, four hundred shekels of silver. And in this way the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the

borders thereof round about, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession, before all that went in at the gate of the city.

Abraham was now ready to bury the body of his dear wife Sarah. He had found a family tomb and was to place the body away in the cave in the field of Machpelah, in the Land of Canaan; and the field and the cave that is therein were made sure unto Abraham ever after as a burying place for his family.

TO THE TEACHER: The story is introduced mainly because it forms a part of the general narrative. If you can do so, emphasize the gentle spirit of Abraham and the beautiful relationship between him and the people of the country. Show how he displayed the right spirit as a stranger in not being arrogant because he was very rich and powerful. Emphasize the evil of arrogance.

MEMORY VERSE: *I am a stranger and sojourner near you; give me possession of a burying place with you that I may bury my dead.*

CHAPTER X.

Choosing a Wife for Isaac—The Death of Abraham

Abraham was now left without a wife, all alone with his boy Isaac. He had his great tent, in which he and his boy lived with the herdsmen all around him—alone with all his wealth of silver and gold and flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. But one thing troubled the old man. He did not want to die until his boy Isaac should have a wife. If only this could be arranged, then the old man felt he could die in peace.

In those days it was a usual thing for a father to choose a wife for his son; and Isaac was now a grown man and ready to marry. But Abraham did not want his boy, as he thought of him, to marry among strangers. The people there did not have the same customs. They had been kind enough to him, and he felt very kindly toward them. But still he wanted very much, indeed, that his son should have a wife from among his own people, far away in the land of the Chaldees.

He did not quite know how to arrange it at first. He was an old man—too old, I suppose, to travel very far. Then, too, you remember, he had been charged to go away and remain in Canaan; and somehow it seemed to him that if he were to return to the land of the Chaldees, he might break the command which had been laid upon him. What is more, it struck him for the same reason that he ought not to send Isaac back there. You see how careful he was to obey. Through all these long years, since he had been a young man, he had remembered the command put upon him by the Great Ruler, how he was to go far away into this new country and found a home and family there.

And so, after awhile, when he had thought about it quite a long time, sitting evening after evening in the front of his tent, he finally decided how he would act. It came to him at last that he would send one of his men far away to the land of the Chaldees, who should try and find a wife there for Isaac and bring her back to him here in Canaan. Perhaps it was not a very easy thing to do; but he was going to carry out this plan, if possible.

He called one of his men to him, whom he knew he could trust, and there, in the evening time, in the cool of the day, he said to this man: "Put, I pray thee, thy hand on my thigh." And thus the man did, as he was told to do, without asking any questions. He knew that something very important was coming, because this was an old custom among people in those days and meant a great deal.

And when the man had done so, Abraham asked of him a solemn promise, saying: "I will make thee promise that thou shalt not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the people here in Canaan, among whom I dwell; but that thou shalt go to my country and to my kindred and there take a wife for my son Isaac." The man thought about it. He wanted to make the promise; but he did not see how it could be carried out easily. He might take that journey, and after he got there find that there would not be any father who would allow his daughter to go back with him alone into the land of Canaan. Then he said to Abraham, in the language of those days: "Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me into this land? I need to take thy son with me."

Now, this is just what Abraham did not want. He would not listen to it for a moment; for this would seem to him, as we have said, as if he were breaking the command laid upon him many, many years ago. He was going to obey. And he answered the man, saying: "Beware that thou bring not my son into that country. The Lord over all told me to come here and leave the land of my nativity, and said that I should

make this my home, and found my family here in Canaan; go thou, therefore, as I have told thee; if the woman be not willing to follow thee, then shalt thou be clear from thy promise; only go thou, and try; if it is not possible, yet thou shalt not bring my son there."

Then the man knew he must do his best and try, at any rate, to get a wife for Isaac in the land of the Chaldees, without taking Isaac with him. You see, people there had learned to obey Abraham and do whatever he told them. The man, therefore, put his hand again on the thigh of Abraham and made the promise. Then he took ten camels and started away, having with him also a great deal of wealth from Abraham, which he might use as gifts among the people to whom he should go.

In those days it was usual to travel with camels, because they had to go over very long sand wastes or deserts, where there was no water to drink. They had to carry their water with them, and, as you know, camels can go a long time without drinking. And so the man started with his camels, making up what was called a caravan, and came at last to the land where Abraham had been born, into a city called Nahor.

He had been thinking all the while, as he traveled over the desert with his camels, what he should do and how he should try to find a wife for Isaac. And as he drew near the city he saw a well of water close by, and he made the camels kneel down and drink from the well.

In that faraway country they did not have many wells and a great supply of water such as we have in our cities nowadays. Most of the wells were situated just outside of the cities; and it was the custom for the people to come out at evening-time and draw water. Then, too, in those days it was the women, rather than the men, who came out to draw water.

All of a sudden, after all his thinking, it came to this man how he would act in choosing a wife for Isaac. He said to himself: "Behold, I stand by this well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city will

come out to draw water; now let it come to pass that the damsel—that was what they called the young girls in those days—to whom I shall say, ‘Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink,’ and she shall say, ‘Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also’; let the same be she whom I shall choose as wife for Isaac.”

Can you see why he decided to act in this way? I think it must have been because he felt that the one who should offer him water to drink, and also give water to his camels, would naturally be a woman of a kind and true heart—just the sort of wife he would want to find for the son of his dear old master, Abraham. It was not a bad way, after all, because he was among strangers and could not have been able to decide very easily in any other way, even if he had gone from one family to another.

The moment had come, therefore, that was to show whether a wife could be found for Isaac here among the people in the land of the Chaldees. The sun was just setting and the air was becoming cool, when the man saw the women passing out from the gate of the city. And as he waited, behold, he saw a beautiful young woman approaching, whose name was Rebekah. She drew near, and went to the well and filled her pitcher with water. Then the man approached her and said gently: “Give me to drink, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher.” I suppose she was startled at first; but it was a rule in those days to be kindly towards strangers, and this girl had evidently been well brought up. There was something about the man so gentle that she had no fear. And she answered kindly: “Drink, my lord;” and she laid down her pitcher and gave him a drink. Then the man waited, seeing what she would do, or how she would act. So far it had gone all very well and he felt quite pleased. As he stood waiting, she turned to him and said: “I will draw for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.” And she emptied her pitcher and ran again unto the well to draw, and drew for all his camels.

All this time the man was looking steadfastly upon her, not saying anything, but making up his mind that this was the girl whom he would choose as a wife for Isaac. The more he looked upon her, the more pleased he was with her kindly spirit.

Then it occurred to him that he ought to show his respect for what she had done; and so he took out a beautiful gold ring and some beautiful bracelets made of rich gold, of the kind people wore in those days. And he said to her: "Whose daughter art thou?" as he gave her the ring and bracelets. And he went on to say: "Is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?" And she said to him: "I am the daughter of Bethuel of this city; we have both straw and provender enough and room for thee to lodge in." Then the man said to himself, "It has all come out right; I am sure I have found a wife for Isaac."

In the meantime, Rebekah went home and told her mother and the people in her home what had happened. Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban; and he ran out and saw the man, and he said to the messenger from Abraham, not knowing, of course, who he was: "Come thou in; wherefore standest thou without? We have prepared the house, and there is room for the camels." And so Laban showed the man into the house and ungirdled the camels, giving them straw and provender, and the water for the man with which to wash his feet and the men's feet that were with him. All was going well now, and the messenger from Abraham was pleased and satisfied. They set meat before him to eat, in order to satisfy his hunger.

And what do you suppose he did? Most persons I fancy would at once have taken the supper set before them, and explained afterwards what they had come for. But not so with this man. He must first do what he had been told to do. And so he said to them: "I will not eat until I have told my errand." And they answered: "Speak on." And then he said:

"I am the servant of Abraham. My master has been very much blest and he has become great; he hath

flocks and herds and silver and gold and men servants and maid servants and camels. And Sarah, my master's wife, had a little child when she was old, and to this child my master will give all his riches. Now, my master Abraham made me promise, saying, 'Thou shalt not take a wife for my son from the people in Canaan where I dwell, but thou shalt go unto my father's house and to my kindred and there take a wife for my son.' And I said unto my master, 'Peradventure the woman will not follow me?' And Abraham told me to go and try and find a wife there among his kindred; and I have traveled a long distance and I came this day unto the well just outside the city, and I said to myself, 'Let it come to pass that the maiden which cometh forth to draw water, to whom I shall say Give me, I pray thee, a little water from thy pitcher to drink, and she shall say to me, 'Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels,' let this same woman become the wife for Isaac.' And before I had done speaking in my heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder and she went down to the well to draw. And I said to her, 'Let me drink, I pray thee,' and she made haste and let down her pitcher and said, 'Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also.' So I drank, and she bade the camels to drink. And I asked her, 'Whose daughter art thou?' and she answered and said, 'I am the daughter of Bethuel.' Then I gave her the ring and the bracelets and I bowed my head and was happy to think perhaps I had found a wife for my master's son. Now, if you will deal kindly with my master, tell me that I may turn back with a wife for his son Isaac."

Then they said to him, feeling it was all right: "Rebekah is before thee; take her and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife." Then the servant knew that all was right; that everything was coming out just in the way it was desired by Abraham.

And so he brought forth the gifts which he had carried with him, jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah. He gave also

to her brother and to her mother precious things. And then he did eat and drink and the men that were with him, and tarried all night. In the morning he rose up and said, "Send me away now unto my master." But it seemed very hard to the father and mother that they should part at once with their dear child. They wanted at least that she should remain with them a few days longer, as they might never see her again, since she had to go into a far country, where they themselves had never been. And so they said: "Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at least ten days; after that she shall go."

But the messenger remembered that Abraham was an old man; and he felt he ought not to wait any longer. He had come all this journey over the desert in order to get a wife for Isaac, and he thought he ought to go back right away. And he said, therefore, to them: "Hinder me not; send me away that I may go to my master." Then they thought the right way would be to let Rebekah decide for herself. So they turned to her and said: "Wilt thou go with this man?"

I suppose it must have been very hard for her to decide so abruptly. There she was with her dear father and mother and family. But she also thought of what the man had told her about old Abraham sitting there, far away, waiting patiently for the return. And she said at last: "I will go." Then came the parting. It was beautiful, although very sad. Rebekah belonged to a large family, and they all came together, father, mother, brothers and sisters, and bade her good-bye, placing her on one of the camels for the long distance she had to travel over the desert to the land of Canaan. I fancy at first she may have cried and felt very sad at parting so suddenly from home and father and mother and all the rest. But she was young, and she knew she was going away to become the wife of a good and true man. And as she traveled on and on, she kept wondering to herself what kind of a man her husband would be.

In the meanwhile you can readily fancy that Isaac

must have been growing a little impatient back there in Canaan, waiting for the woman who was to become his wife. Abraham, as an old man, felt it would come out all right; and he said nothing. But at last Isaac could not wait any longer. He went out thinking perhaps he would meet the caravan on its homeward journey. And sure enough, there in the distance, when he lifted up his eyes, were the camels approaching. And Rebekah, looking ahead, saw Isaac, and she alighted from off the camel and said to the messenger: "What man is this that cometh to meet us?" And he answered "It is Isaac, the son of my master Abraham—the man whom thou art to marry." At this she drew down her veil as Isaac approached, and so at last the whole caravan arrived in the presence of Abraham.

This certainly was a pleasant home-coming. Rebekah became the wife of Isaac, and Abraham was well satisfied. He was completely happy now, and felt that the time had come when he should be ready to die. He was now one hundred and sixty-three, and older than Sarah had been at her death.

At last the end came to the good, patient, obedient old Abraham. The aged patriarch who had lived all his years among strangers in the land of Canaan was now at rest. And they laid his body away along with the body of his wife Sarah in the family tomb in the cave of Machpelah. Isaac then became the head of the family while all his father's wealth fell to him. But he had been brought up well and was a brave, strong, true young man, and lived in the same true, simple way as his father Abraham had done.

TO THE TEACHER: This is to be told more as an exquisitely beautiful story from early times. Each detail should be dwelt upon. Go over the narrative a number of times, if possible. Again bring up the loyalty of Abraham; how he never forgot the commands laid upon him and how obedient he was to the spirit of a charge as well as to the letter. Emphasize how the servant had quite the same spirit in his obedience

to Abraham. Show a picture of a caravan and of "Rebekah at the Well." Point out the gentle modesty of Rebekah and her sweet spirit of helpfulness. At the end of the chapter it might be well to go back and have a review of the stories about Abraham. Too much cannot be made of the beautiful character of this man as a union of gentleness with greatness.

MEMORY VERSE: *I will not eat until I have told my errand. Hinder me not; send me away that I may go to my Master.*

CHAPTER XI.

Jacob and Esau.

We have been narrating some beautiful stories about Abraham and his family there in Canaan. But now I must come to something else in my tales, which is very sad. I wish it were possible for me not to say anything about it. I wish it had never happened at all. It ought not to have happened, because it was something very bad indeed. But, as you know, people in the world are not all good; and then too, some people are not very good and not very bad. Now and then it happens that people who are not very bad in their characters, may do really bad things which they have to regret all their lives.

I have to tell you the story of two brothers, and at once it will make you think about the story of those two brothers, Cain and Abel. But this is not about a murder, although it is something almost as bad. One of these brothers for some reason did not always speak the truth; at times he would actually tell lies; and I think you will feel after you have heard it all, that this brother was almost as bad as Cain. But you must know about this, because it is a part of our story and there is no way to avoid it. You must know something about the evil which has taken place in the world, as well as about the good which is there.

My story is about two children of Isaac and Rebekah. It seems that their first boys were twins; and they called one Esau and the other Jacob. These boys were not at all alike in their ways or their characters. As they grew up Esau became fond of hunting, and as this was one way of making a living in those days, Esau became a hunter. But Jacob, on the other hand,

liked the work which had been followed by his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham. He lived in tents and kept flocks and herds.

Now, although these two boys had been "twins," as we say, yet Esau had been born just a little before Jacob and was therefore called the elder son. And it was customary in those days that the eldest son should receive what was known as the "birthright." This meant that he should have most of the wealth owned by his father after his father's death; not only that, but that he should be the head of the whole family or tribe. And as Esau was the eldest of the two brothers, it was established that he should receive the birthright later on and become the head of the family. And Isaac, the father, had thought of it in this way all along.

But the boy Jacob was not pleased that his brother Esau should receive the birthright. He kept thinking that he wanted it for himself, and that he would like to become the head of the family after his father's death. This was not right, because the law of the land had fixed it otherwise; and he should have been content and made the best of it. I am quite sure that his father Isaac would not have left him without anything at all. What Jacob really wanted, I suppose, was the honor of being the head of the family. And the more he thought of it, the more he made up his mind that in some way or other he would try to get that birthright even if he had to steal it from his brother.

As we have said, if he were to do this, he would have to be deceitful and tell lies. But it may be that he thought that inasmuch as he was twin brother with Esau, he had about as much right to the honor as Esau himself. And when people want anything very much, sometimes they do not stop to think of the bad conduct they may have to be guilty of, in order to get what they are after. I do not really suppose that Jacob at the start intended exactly to cheat or lie or to steal; but he just wanted that birthright. What is more, he felt somehow that his brother Esau, as a hunter, was not quite the right sort of a man to become the head of

a family. Then, too, perhaps Esau himself would not care about it.

In the first place, Jacob would have to get Esau to promise to give up his birthright. Unless this was done there would be no hope for him. And now what do you suppose Jacob did? It was something awfully mean. One day, Esau, who had been hunting, came in very hungry indeed. He had not eaten anything for a long while, and was so weak and faint that he could scarcely stand. He thought he was about to die for lack of food. And there close by him stood Jacob with some red pottage in his hand, the kind of food which they had there in those days. Esau, almost at the point of death, faint and weak from hunger, scarcely able to stand, raised himself up and turned to Jacob, and said with a weak voice: "Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage, for I am faint." Jacob saw that he had his chance. I hate to tell you what he did, it was so mean and selfish and wicked.

There was his brother almost dying of hunger; and this is what he said to Esau: "Sell me first, thy birthright." Esau could do nothing. He thought to himself, I shall die of hunger unless I give in to what Jacob asks of me. And so in order to get food and save himself from dying of hunger, he promised his birthright to Jacob. This is why we often hear nowadays about "selling one's birthright for a mess of pottage."

Yet while this had taken place between Jacob and Esau, the father Isaac knew nothing about it. Probably Esau had not told his father, and I am sure Jacob had begun to feel ashamed of it and did not say anything about it himself. But the time had come when Isaac was an old man and just about to die; and he had to give his "Blessing," as it is called, to his elder son Esau, handing over to him the family wealth and making him the head of the family.

The custom was at such a time that the eldest son should kneel before his father, while the father would lay his hands on the son's head and speak the blessing, and then give him all the wealth and make him the

head of the family. It seems that Esau and Jacob had been born when Isaac was quite an old man, so that by the time they grew up, the father was about to die.

Now came the moment when Jacob would have to make up his mind whether he would try to carry out his plan of getting the birthright and blessing away from Esau. He had not talked about it any more since he had stolen the promise from his brother in that cruel way. It may be that he wished he had never done this; yet he had not lost his desire for that birthright. He went on thinking about it just the same. And what makes it all the more sad is that his mother cared more for him than she did for his brother. This had been very wrong in Rebekah, and we cannot help blaming her for it. While she possessed a kindly spirit, as was shown by her treatment of the messenger at the well in the land of the Chaldees; and while she had been a true and loving wife to Isaac; yet this favoritism was not just the right thing. She wanted to get the birthright for Jacob, as much as he wanted it himself. She did not want it to go to Esau.

In the meantime, Isaac, the old father, who was now almost if not quite blind, called Esau, his elder son, and said unto him, "Son," and he answered, "Here am I." And Isaac said: "Behold I am old and shall soon die; now therefore, take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go to the field and take me some venison; and make me savory meat such as I like and bring it to me that I may eat; that I may give thee my blessing before I die."

And Rebekah heard when Isaac spoke in this way to his son Esau, and at once began to think how she should act in order to get the birthright and blessing for her other boy Jacob. This is not a pleasant story, and I am glad we shall be through with it soon. But we must go on.

Rebekah made up her mind that she would deceive her husband Isaac. And so she said to Jacob, "Behold I hear thy father speaking unto Esau thy brother, saying 'bring me venison and make me savory meat that I may eat and give thee my blessing.' Now, there-

fore, my son, obey my voice and do what I tell thee. Go thou to the flock and fetch me thence two kids and I will make savory meat for thy father such as he likes, and thou shalt take it to thy father that he may eat, so that he may give thee his blessing instead of giving it to Esau."

It is very sad to think that the mother of Jacob should have asked her son—her boy—to go through this lie in order to cheat and deceive her aged husband. It may be easier for us to forgive Jacob, because it was urged upon him; yet we cannot help thinking he ought to have refused at once. A father is a father, and a lie is a lie.

But now that Jacob knew how his mother wanted that he should have the blessing and become the head of the family instead of Esau, he had not the strength to say No. He had thought about this all along, and the temptation was very great. Then too, he had made the beginning in the way he had stolen the promise from Esau a long while before. And he said to his mother: "My father will feel me; behold, my brother is a hairy man and I am a smooth man; I shall seem to my father as a deceiver and he will curse me rather than give me his blessing." Then the mother said to him: "Upon me be the curse, my son; do thou obey my voice and go and fetch the kids." And he went and brought the kids and gave them to his mother and she made savory meat such as his father liked. Then Rebekah took the raiment of Esau which was with her in the house and put it upon Jacob, and she put the skins of goats upon his hands and upon the smooth of his neck, and she gave the savory meat and the bread which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

Then he came unto his father and said, "My father," and the father said, "Here am I; who art thou?" and Jacob answered—Just think of this! I wish we did not have to tell you the words; but we must—"I am Esau thy first born. I have done according as thou badest me. Arise, I pray thee; sit and eat of my venison and then give me thy blessing."

Isaac for a moment suspected something. I am not

sure but that he knew of the character of Jacob; because a boy could not have acted this way towards his brother and not have in some way done other mean acts. It is hard to think that a father should be obliged to feel this way about his boy; but it could not be helped. There was that awful deed which Isaac knew nothing about, when Jacob had stolen that promise about the birthright. And since that time, Jacob had never been the good, honest boy he had been before; there was something about him different in his voice. And the old father before becoming blind, had somehow seen this in his boy and had been troubled about it.

He was now going to make very sure that the son before him was Esau, and so he said: "Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son; whether thou be my very son Esau or not." And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and the father felt his hands and his neck and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice but the hands are the hands of Esau." You see, he could not tell, because of the way Rebekah had put the clothing and skins upon Jacob.

I cannot help wondering why Jacob did not tremble or let the venison fall, when saying those words to his old, blind father. But Isaac asked him again, "Art thou my very son, Esau?" and Jacob said "I am." And then the old father said: "Bring near to me the venison that I may eat of it." And Jacob brought it to him and Isaac did eat. Then Jacob knelt down before the old man, and the father raised his hands to lay them upon the head of Jacob and give him the blessing, making him the head of the family and giving to him all his wealth, saying: "Let people serve thee and nations bow down to thee; be ruler over thy brethren and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee. Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be every one that blesseth thee."

It is certain by this time Jacob must have been trembling all over at the thought of the awful lie he was guilty of. But Isaac would not have understood what the trembling meant. At last the blessing was over and Jacob went away. At the very moment when

Jacob passed out, Esau came in with *his* venison, bringing it unto his father. And he said to Isaac, his old father: "Let my father rise and eat of his son's venison and give him the blessing."

Isaac must have been quite overcome when he heard this, as he gasped out: "Who art thou?" And Esau answered him, "Thy son, thy first-born, Esau." And Isaac answered, "Who then, is he who hath taken venison and brought it to me and I have eaten of it before thou camest and have given him the blessing?"

Then Esau understood. It must be he had forgotten how, years before, when very hungry and at the point of death, he had promised his birthright to Jacob for some food. But it all came back to him now when he had lost that birthright and was no longer to be the head of the family. And he cried out with an exceeding great and bitter cry, saying unto his father, "Bless me, even me, also, O my father."

It was too late. The blessing had been given; the words had been spoken. According to the law of that country when the words had been said, they could not be taken back. And so the father could only answer: "Thy brother came with venison and hath taken away thy blessing." But still Esau kept pleading with his father, asking if he had not also a blessing for him, and Isaac could only answer: "Alas, I have made him thy ruler, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; what then shall I do for thee, my son?" But Esau kept saying to his father, "Hast thou not one blessing for me, my father? Bless me, even me, also, O my father!" and Esau lifted up his voice and wept and the poor old father wept with him.

But there was nothing to be done. The blessing had been given. Jacob was to become the head of the family.

TO THE TEACHER: In the analysis of the character of Jacob, dwell upon him all along as a weak man rather than one thoroughly bad. Show how such a person tends to become underhanded or

"tricky" by his very nature. Point out a certain want of manliness about Jacob. Emphasize the positive awfulness of deceiving one's father—as if it were almost like parent-murder—and most of all, an aged blind father. On the other hand, be very careful in the way you speak of the sin of Rebekah. It should be regarded more as giving way to a weakness. We must be careful about encouraging children to pass judgment upon mothers. Suitable pictures will not easily be found for this lesson. Poor ones would be worse than none at all.

MEMORY VERSE: *Hast thou not one blessing for me, my father? Bless me, even me, also, O my father.*

CHAPTER XII.

Jacob in a Distant Land.

By this time it was known what Jacob had done. It may be that he was already sorry for it. In fact, I feel quite sure of this, because from all we know about him he had not been really a bad boy nor a bad man. He had given in to an awful temptation by permitting himself to think about something which he had no right to think of at all.

But now there was no help for it. Even if he had been sorry and desired so much to give back the birthright, according to the law of the land he could not do it. The words had been spoken; he had received the blessing, and so had to become the head of the family.

At the same time, his mother Rebekah knew quite well that Esau would be very angry, and she was afraid that in his anger he would make bold to kill Jacob. I hate to tell you all this about Rebekah, because in other ways she had been a good wife to Isaac. She had made the sad mistake of showing favor to one of her two sons. Now, therefore, she was going to be punished, because she would have to part with Jacob after all. She could not have him with her any longer. She would have to send her son away, and be left there with the old, blind father, Isaac, knowing that he no longer could trust her, and feeling how unhappy he must be for all the rest of his days.

So Rebekah, thinking about the safety of her son Jacob, called him to her and said: "Behold, thy brother Esau may try to kill thee; now therefore my son, obey my voice; arise, flee thou to Laban my brother, back to my former home in the land of the Chal-

dees. When Esau has forgotten what thou hast done to him, or his anger has passed away, then I will send word and fetch thee back again."

Jacob, now a full grown man, left his father and mother, to go far away from his home into another country, feeling somehow that even while he had received the blessing of his father Isaac, yet in another way, a curse must follow him.

I doubt very much if he was happy; and we should feel pretty sure that troubles would come to him some time. It is quite true that all people have trouble; yet those who do right may be happy in spite of misfortunes coming to them. But we can be sure that when troubles came to Jacob, they would be troubles indeed. He would never be able to get over the thought of the wrong he had done to his brother Esau. I am certain that the memory of it all would stay with him to the end of his days; so that whenever anything happened to him or any trouble came, he would at once think it was a punishment for the way in which he had stolen that birthright from his brother, and for the way he had deceived his old father in telling that lie when getting the blessing.

But he came at last to the far away country to which he had been sent, and found his uncle Laban, who, you will remember, had come out years before to the well to meet the messenger of Abraham, going there to get a wife for Isaac.

This is the way the story is told to us: Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the children of the east. And he looked, and behold a well in the field, and lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying there by it, for out of that well they watered their flocks; and a great stone was upon the well's mouth. And thither were all the flocks gathered.

And Jacob said unto them: "My brethren, whence are ye? Know ye Laban, the son of Nahor?" And they said, "We know him." And he said unto them, "Is it well with him?" And they said, "It is well, and behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep."

And Jacob said, "Lo, it is yet high day; neither is it time for the cattle to be gathered together; water ye the sheep and go and feed them." And they said, "We cannot, till all the flocks be gathered together, and the stone be rolled from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep."

You can be sure that Jacob was glad at last to come to the home of his uncle Laban, although it may be that he was not quite sure how Laban would receive him. When a man has done anything wicked, he somehow feels as if everybody will know about it and will dislike him for it; although there had not been time for rumor of the conduct of Jacob to have reached this far country, so that Laban might know of it. Yet Jacob could not be quite sure of this, for he felt very mean and ashamed because of the way he had treated his old father and stolen the birthright from Esau.

He did not go at once, therefore, to meet Laban, but waited to see what would happen, and staid there with the flocks, talking with the men. And while he was speaking with them, Rachel, the daughter of Laban, came with her father's sheep.

You know in those days the daughters worked like the sons, in the field, helping to tend sheep along with their brothers or their father. One hears of shepherds and also of shepherdesses; and Rachel was a shepherdess, keeping her father's sheep.

As Rachel drew near with her flock, Jacob stepped forward in a manly way and rolled the stone from the well's mouth and watered the flock for her. Then he told her who he was, trembling lest perhaps she should know what he had done. But he was glad at heart when she received him kindly and rushed away at once to tell her father about it all, how the son of his sister Rebekah had traveled a long distance and come back to their home. Laban at once came out and greeted Jacob, thinking of the time a long while ago when he had parted with his dear sister.

And so he met the young man and embraced him and brought him to his house. And Jacob asked him that he might stay there for awhile and live with Laban,

working for him and helping him to take care of the flocks and herds as if it were his own home.

We do not suppose he had at first intended to stay there a very long while. But he was glad enough for the kind welcome which had been given to him; and I think he was also more than glad to be away from anything which would keep making him think of the way he had cheated his brother and his old father.

Laban was quite willing to have him stay there as a member of the family, but he said to him kindly: "Because thou art a relative, my nephew, is no reason why thou shouldst work for me for nothing. Tell me what shall be thy wages?" Then Jacob began to think. He did not at first want to serve for money. When he had come to that well and rolled away the stone and helped Rachel to water her flock, he had been pleased with this young woman and thought how glad he would be to have her sometime for his wife. And now that he was in the home and saw more of Rachel, that thought came over him very often.

And so in reply to Laban's question, he said: "I will serve thee seven years for Rachel, thy younger daughter." This seemed to please Laban and he answered: "It is better that I give her to thee than that I should give her to another man. Abide with me."

In those days it was the custom sometimes for people of the same kindred to marry each other, although it might strike us as a little strange nowadays, this marriage between Jacob and Rachel.

But when the seven years had come to an end, the first really great blow fell upon Jacob. Up to that time he had always had his own way. He had managed to carry out his scheme and get the birthright and the blessing; and it may be that he fancied it would always be that way and that everything would go on prosperously for him all his life. But it worked just the other way. The first trouble had come.

When the seven years were up, Jacob turned to his uncle Laban and said: "My time is fulfilled: give me Rachel for my wife and let me go." Then Laban

gathered together all the men of the place and they had a great feast. But when the time came for the wedding, instead of giving him Rachel, he gave him the other daughter, Leah, for his wife.

Just think how Jacob must have felt! There he had gone on, working year after year, hoping and looking forward to the time when he could have this beautiful young Rachel for his wife and then return to his native land. Now he saw that she was not to be his wife after all. I fancy then for the first time, it must have come over him what troubles he would have all the rest of his days, and I am sure he said to himself, "This is the beginning of my punishment."

And so Jacob turned to Laban after the feast, when Leah had been given to him for his wife, and said: "What is this that thou hast done unto me? Did I not serve thee for thy daughter Rachel? Why then hast thou deceived me?" And Laban answered, "It is not done this way here, to give the younger before the other child. Go on in your services and I will give thee the other also, Rachel, for the service which thou wilt serve with me yet another seven years."

They still had the custom I have told you about, where the man could have more than one wife; and so in those days it seemed all right that Jacob should first marry Leah, and then serve another seven years that he might have Rachel. He had been very fond indeed of the beautiful young girl who had met him at the well. Seven years seemed a long time; but he thought of the happiness in store, and if by this means he could have Rachel in return for his labor, he would be willing to serve even yet another seven years. Then too, it may have crossed his mind that if he could wait fourteen years there would be less danger when he returned home, from the anger of his brother Esau.

And Jacob served another seven years, and hence won Rachel for his wife. I suspect he began to know what it meant for people to deceive him, just as he had deceived his old father. How long after this Jacob may have staid with Laban in the land of the

Chaldees I do not know; but it was quite a number of years, until he had a large family—some eleven sons altogether. At last he made up his mind to leave Laban and return to his native home.

Then he gathered his children together and all his flocks and herds—for he too, had now become a rich man—and he felt he must go back to become the head of the family in Canaan. It was his duty to do this now, whether he cared for it or not, inasmuch as he had received the blessing, and the law of the land made it so that he could not give it away even if he wanted to.

Just after the birth of his youngest boy, Joseph, Jacob said unto Laban, "Send me away that I may go unto mine own place, into mine own country. Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, and let me go, for thou knowest my service wherewith I have served thee." Then Laban asked him what wages he desired besides his daughters which he had given to Jacob. And Jacob made this reply: "I will pass through all thy flocks today, removing from thence every speckled and spotted one, and every black one among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats, and of such shall be my hire." And Laban said, "Behold, be it according to thy word." And then Jacob departed with Leah and Rachel and his sons with all their flocks and herds, and came back to the land of Canaan.

But there was one thing that troubled Jacob very much. He knew that Esau was there, that he would have to meet him; and he was not quite sure, even if he should ask forgiveness, just how he would be received. By this time of course, he had no need of the wealth of his father, because he had much property of his own. But there was no way of getting out of it. He had deceived his old father and stolen the birth-right from his brother.

All this must have spoiled the pleasure of this home-coming, in spite of the fact that he now had all the wealth he wanted, and his wives and children with him. He could not be happy, for he kept thinking,

"What will Esau say? How will he act? Will Esau forgive me?" At last he could think of no other way than to send messengers on ahead to Esau, announcing his coming, bidding them to say to Esau: "Thus saith thy servant, Jacob: I have sojourned with Laban and staid until now, and I have oxen and asses and flocks, and men servants and maid servants, and I have sent to tell my lord that I may find grace in thy sight." And the messengers went on and found Esau and told him of the coming of Jacob, and returned again, saying: "We came to thy brother Esau, and now he cometh to meet thee with four hundred men with him."

You can fancy what a state of mind Jacob must have been in. The messengers could not say in what sort of a mood Esau was. They could not tell him whether Esau was going to be kind and forgiving, or whether he was coming with all these men to attack Jacob and kill him. And we are sure that Jacob feared the worst, because his conscience troubled him very much.

But there was nothing for him to do but to go on with his family and his flocks and herds, until he should come up with Esau and they should meet as brothers.

The first thing he did was to pick out a large number of sheep and cattle from the flocks and herds, along with other wealth, and to send this on as a present to Esau, saying to the messengers: "When Esau, my brother, meeteth thee and asketh thee, Who art thou, and Whither goest thou? and Whose are these also? Then thou shalt say, They be thy servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau." And so Jacob thought to himself; I will do my best to please him with the presents I will send on; and when I come to see his face, it may be that he will receive me and that we will again become brothers.

At this time, it seems, Jacob's name was changed. It may be because he had really changed in character. His conscience had troubled him a great deal, I suppose, and he had made up his mind that for the rest

of his days he would try to be a good and true man. The Ruler of the World, who had known what was going on all the while, must have felt sorry indeed about him, and was glad now, we assume, to see that a change had come in the character of Jacob. And so he decided to give him another name, and told him that hereafter he was to be called Israel, and that his family and those who should come after him should be called Israelites.

In the meantime, there was Jacob with his new name, Israel, waiting for the coming of Esau, and he looked up, and behold, there was Esau drawing nigh, and with him the four hundred men. Then, leaving his wife and children behind him, Jacob went forward and bowed down humbly seven times before his brother. There was nothing else for him to do. If his brother should come forward to kill him, he would not resist. He would wait and accept whatever happened.

And how do you suppose Esau acted? Years had gone by, and his anger had passed away. He too had his own flocks and herds, his own family and his own wealth. He was more than glad to meet his brother again, and so Esau ran forward and threw his arms around Jacob, and they wept together. Then after awhile, he raised his eyes and saw the women and children before him, and asked: "Who are these with thee?" And Jacob told him they were his family. Then the children drew near, and the wives, Leah and Rachel, and they bowed down to Esau, who at once asked, "What does all this mean—this company which has come out to me?" And Jacob answered: "To find grace in thy sight." And Esau put out his hand and said: "I have enough; my brother, let that thou hast be thine."

This was a hard blow to Jacob; very hard indeed. He wanted somehow to make up for the awful wrong he had done to his brother; and he felt it would be something if he could only make a gift of some kind to Esau. So he pleaded, saying: "Now I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand, inasmuch as I have seen thy face,

and I am glad to meet thee. Take, I pray thee, my gift that is brought thee, because I have enough."

Do you think Esau ought to have taken it? He did not care for it. Then too, if he did receive it, perhaps it would seem as if, after all, it made up for the loss of his birthright. I fancy many a man would have refused it and said, "This is too much; I cannot take the gift, for I cannot let it seem as if I had never been wronged in that way."

But not so with Esau. He had forgiven his brother; and so he accepted the gift. Then Esau went back to his own home, and Jacob arrived with his flocks and herds, and all his family once more in the land of Canaan, where, long before, his father Isaac and his mother Rebekah had been buried in the family tomb, the cave at Machpelah.

TO THE TEACHER: Carefully point out a certain good side to Jacob in his readiness to "serve" for Rachel, pointing out what a mixed character we discover in him. The feeling to be aroused about Jacob would be rather one of pity or at times of contempt. Make the young people see that to be pitied for weakness of character is almost as bad as to be despised. Dwell upon the disposition to deceit in those days, in Jacob's experience with Laban, and how he got just what he deserved. Ask the question as to whether Esau should have accepted the gift offered to him. Let the children have their own opinions upon it. Show a picture, if possible, of Jacob meeting Esau. Fix definitely in the memories of the young people the importance of the change of name to "Israel." These are incidents of value in the knowledge to be acquired by the children.

MEMORY VERSE: *I have enough, my brother; let that thou hast, be thine.*

CHAPTER XIII.

Joseph and His Brethren.

Our story now comes to Jacob and his family. We shall have a great deal to say about his twelve sons.

But I must begin by telling you something about the youngest son, Joseph. Hereafter, instead of speaking of his father as Jacob we shall use the other name, Israel.

All along we have felt that this was not going to be a happy family. It had not begun right, because the life of the father in his younger days had started in the wrong way.

For a time it seemed as if all would go well, now that they were back in the Land of Canaan, in the country which had been promised to their family by the Great Ruler. By and by, however, I am sorry to say that trouble arose among all those boys. One after another they grew up into young manhood, and had their own families, taking charge of their father's flocks and herds and having the great wealth which had come down to them from Abraham and Isaac, as well as what they had been able to add, themselves.

It seemed that Israel became very fond of his favorite boy, Joseph. He made a pet of him, as we should say, showing more care for him than for all the other sons taken together. If there was anything nice for any one of the children, it was kept for Joseph. We can be quite sure, therefore, that the other brothers would not be pleased with this. It would not strike them as fair that their father should pay all attention

to their youngest brother and not think of *them*. And so we can see that by and by they would become jealous of him, then come to dislike him, or to hate him and wish to do him evil; and this is the bad thing about jealousy. Exactly as we have said, instead of loving Joseph as the youngest of the family, they began to dislike him and then to hate him.. And the more they hated him, the more fond of him was the father Israel; until finally, in order to show his affection for the lad, he made him a coat of many colors, which of course put the boy forward as more important than the other sons. What is more, I frankly admit that, owing to all this, the boy Joseph began to be spoiled, as we say. You know what that means, being a "spoiled" child.

At heart Joseph was a good boy and meant to do right. But nobody can be petted in this way and have the best things given to him, and the rest of the family be neglected, without, by and by, becoming selfish and inclined to think of himself as being of more importance, and perhaps to "show off" or "brag" a little.

And this is what happened to Joseph. In spite of his good heart and honest character, he began to *talk*, knowing as he did, how much his father loved him more than the other brothers. For instance, one time Joseph had a dream and he told it to his brothers, although he ought not to have done so, because in the way he spoke, it made him look more important and made them hate him more and more. He said to them: "Hear ye, I pray, this dream which I have dreamed: behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo my sheaf arose and stood upright, and behold, your sheaves stood round about and bowed down to my sheaf."

You can see at once what this meant. He was putting himself forward even before his older brothers. He ought not to have done this. And still we cannot blame him very much, because he was quite young and did not know better, and his father was spoiling him. But this made his brothers very angry, as it implied he would rule over them. And they said to him: "Shalt

thou indeed reign over us?" Then, as we are told, they hated him all the more. When Joseph saw how his brothers felt, surely he ought to have known better than to tell any more dreams. But he was spoiled still more; and so when he had another dream he went and told it to his brothers in this way: "Behold, I have dreamed once more: the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me." This time, however, his father did not like it and rebuked him for it, seeing that it meant that even the father was going to be ruled over by him. And Israel said: "What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren come and bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?"

At last, you see, the father began to find out the mistake he had made in spoiling Joseph so much. By this time the boy was about seventeen years old. One day while his brothers were taking care of the flocks in a place called Shechem, Israel found it necessary to send word to his other sons. And he said to Joseph: "Do not thy brothers feed their flocks in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them." And Joseph said, "Here am I." And Israel said to him, "Go and see whether it be well with thy brothers and well with the flocks and bring me word again."

Joseph started out, but he was not much accustomed to traveling; in fact, like spoiled children, he did not know how to do anything for himself; and this was very bad indeed. Yet he could not help it; he had been brought up that way and he was to suffer for it by and by. He went, therefore, trying to find his brothers, and came to Shechem; but they were not there. Then a certain man found him wandering in the field and asked him, saying, "Whom seekest thou?" and Joseph answered, "I seek my brethren; tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks;" and the man answered, "They are departed hence, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" And Joseph went after his brethren and found them at last in Dothan.

Now, in the meantime, those brothers had been talking a good deal by themselves while they were taking

care of their flocks. They had grown more and more jealous of Joseph and had begun to dislike him exceedingly, because they thought their father liked him so much that he neglected them and did not treat them fairly. And while they were talking together they saw him approaching. Then all of a sudden the thought struck them that they would seize him and put him to death. It was an awful thought to come to them that they would actually slay their own brother. But this is what they said: "Behold, this dreamer cometh; come now therefore, let us slay him and cast him into one of the pits; and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him; and we shall see what will become of his dreams."

I am happy to say that one of the brothers refused to allow any such wickedness. He felt that there was no way of talking his brothers out of their desire to get rid of Joseph, and so he said: "Shed no blood; cast him into a pit nearby there in the wilderness and lay no hand upon him."

You see it was Reuben's plan to get the boy out of the pit later on and send him back to his father. And, as we are told, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, they stripped him of his coat of many colors that was on him and they took him and cast him into the pit, and the pit was empty; there was no water in it.

Now, if nothing else had happened, all might have gone well and Reuben might have saved the boy and sent him home. But as the brothers sat down to eat their bread, a caravan of Ishmaelites came by on their way to Egypt; and Judah, one of the other brothers, said: "What is the use of slaying our brother by putting him this way into a pit? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, so that we shall not have to feel that we have caused his death, inasmuch as he is our brother." Then the other brothers hearkened unto Judah. They lifted Joseph out of the pit and sold him to the Ishmaelites as a slave, for twenty pieces of silver. Reuben had not been there when this took place, and he still thought Joseph was in the pit. Later on, therefore, he went alone to the spot in order to take him out and send him

home. And behold, Joseph was not there. Then Reuben was terribly sorry and rent his clothes, and he returned to his brothers and said: "The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?"

So the other brothers told him what they had done; and they felt that the only thing they could do was to deceive their old father Israel by making him think his boy was dead. They took the coat of many colors and dipped it in the blood of one of the flock and brought it to their father, saying, "This have we found; know now whether it be thy son's coat or not." And poor Israel saw, then, what a blow had come upon him. As far as he knew, the darling of his heart had been devoured by wild animals. The troubles of his life had not come to an end, although Esau had forgiven him. Once more he had to think of the wickedness of his younger days as he said to himself: "The punishment is coming now." And he could only answer to his sons: "It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces." And the dear old father rent his garments and put sackcloth about him—which was the custom in those days in time of sorrow—and he mourned for his darling son many days. The rest of his sons and daughters tried to comfort him in every way they knew how, but he refused to be comforted and said: "I will go down to my grave mourning my son that is lost."

All the while you see, throughout this life of Israel—whose name had been Jacob—we keep thinking how the wrong conduct of his earlier days was being punished. And I suppose he was all the while thinking of it himself; for, as we have said, whenever anything happened to him, his conscience would trouble him and he would feel that he was being punished for his crime against his brother Esau.

TO THE TEACHER: The "Joseph Cycle" of tales make one continuous narrative. But in order to fix the incidents firmly on the mind it were better to divide them into a number of separate stories. Have some discussion as to the characters of the various brothers

and the shades of guilt or innocence which they displayed. Raise the question: Did Joseph get what he deserved? Was he really proud or vain; or was it only because he had been spoiled? Give as the first answer: Wait and see. Show how it is that in a young person we cannot always judge, although the person may perhaps himself know. Dwell on the phrase, because it has become classic, "coat of many colors." Discuss what sort of a garment it may have been. Ask whether the bad feelings of the brothers were justified; or if the brothers should have considered and reflected that Joseph may have been a little spoiled as the youngest child. Indicate how a dark thread of deceit seems to run all through the experiences in the life of Jacob, as if an avenging judgment was pursuing him. Show how he never seemed to be happy or sure of anything. Introduce a picture of a caravan taking Joseph down to Egypt. You may find it necessary to explain about the "Ishmaelites" as descendants of Hagar and Ishmael; if possible the point could be passed over.

MEMORY VERSE: *I will go down to my grave mourning my son that is lost.*

CHAPTER XIV.

Joseph in Egypt.

You can feel pretty sure that Joseph was no longer a happy boy; for he had been a spoiled child and was being punished for it now. He could not go back to abide with his father. He was being carried into Egypt as a slave, where he would be sold and have to do hard work and not have any home of his own, and no mother and father to think about him or care for him.

By this time he had come to his senses. His real character began to show itself; and he no longer acted like a spoiled child, as when he told his dreams to his brothers. You will want to learn about what happened to him there in Egypt. And I might say that a great deal happened to him, because by and by he became a very important person there, owing to his good conduct and to the manly character he displayed later on.

He was bought as a slave by an officer of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, whose name was Potiphar, a captain in the army there. For a time Joseph was treated very kindly because he was so well behaved. He was given a good place in the house and was made an important person in the family. It was there that an evil temptation came to him which I must tell you about.

It seems that Potiphar had a beautiful wife, who, however, was not a good woman, and was not a true wife to him at all. She became very fond of Joseph, and so one day she suggested to him that he should become her husband. This is something awful even to think about. But when she proposed it to him, Joseph, like a true man, said to her: "Behold, my master knoweth nothing about this and hath put me in charge

of everything in the house. There is none greater in the house than I; neither hath he kept back anything from me. How then can I do this great wickedness?" And she caught hold of his garment in order to persuade him; yet he would not listen to her and ran out of the house. But she had hold of his coat, and as he ran away it slipped off, and she held it in her hand.

Then of course she was awfully afraid. She did not know but that Joseph would go and tell her husband what she had proposed. She had a bad heart and was going to do anything to save herself from punishment; hence she decided that she would accuse Joseph of having suggested to her that she become his wife and leave Potiphar. And when Potiphar came home she stepped forward to meet him before Joseph might see him, and she said: "Thy slave which thou hast kept in this house came to me and proposed that I should become his wife and be untrue to thee; and dost thou know, it came to pass that as I cried out, he left his garment by me and fled?"

Then, of course, Potiphar, believing his wife and not knowing how untrue she was, grew very angry with Joseph and put him in prison. And there was poor Joseph, the pet of his father, Israel, after having been sold as a slave by his brothers, now cast into prison there in Egypt. Yet we cannot help admiring him and feeling sure that it would all come out right by and by, because he had been brave and true. You see, when people have the best kind of a character, other people get to know of it by and by. And they discovered this little by little; the keeper of the prison saw what a good, noble young man Joseph was, and after having been told what Potiphar had done, he made Joseph keeper of the prison there, giving him a position of honor.

But I am quite sure that Joseph was not happy during the time he had this position of honor, for he was not his own master and could not go back to his dear father Israel. Yet there was nothing for him to do but stay there and do his duty as best he knew how.

Little by little, in one way or another, Joseph began

to be of more and more importance; until by and by Pharaoh, the king, heard of him. The way it all came about was something rather strange, and we should not quite understand it nowadays. In those times people thought a great deal about dreams. You can see this from the way Joseph told his dreams to his brothers and his father, and how uneasy they had been made by those dreams. Nowadays we think nothing about dreams, and know they do not mean anything at all. They are just dreams and nothing more.

As it was, at that time they were always very much troubled when some very striking dream came to them, and they wanted to have it explained. Now Joseph, having been a very bright boy, had a keen mind, and he had learned how to give interpretations of dreams. At any rate, it showed he must have had a great deal of mind.

By and by the king, Pharaoh, had a dream which troubled him very much. And he sent for different men to see whether they could interpret his dream. One after another came and told him all sorts of things. But he was not satisfied. Finally he was told of this young man, the keeper of the prison, a slave who seemed to know how to explain dreams. And Pharaoh sent for Joseph and told him his story, and Joseph did the best he could to tell him what it might mean. He explained how, if the dream were true, a famine was coming in Egypt, so that after there were a number of years of plenty, there would be a number of years of want. As we know, famines were not unusual there in Egypt. They happened every now and then. In certain years there would not be enough water for the land and nothing would grow. During the hundreds and thousands of years people have lived in Egypt this has taken place a great many times.

It seems that Pharaoh the king thought that Joseph was right, and decided to act on the interpretation of his dream by this young man. And it all turned out just as Joseph had suggested. For a number of years the country was very prosperous; and then after a while famine came. There was no water for the land. The

corn became parched and dry. But owing to the fact that Joseph had suggested how all this might come to pass, the king had taken great pains to have enough food saved up during the years of plenty, so as to keep the people from starving to death during the famine that followed.

By this time you can be sure that Joseph was no longer just a mere keeper of the prison. No; Pharaoh the king had promoted him to be an officer in the palace. He was still, in a sense, a slave; not belonging to himself; yet he had a very high position and was a great man in Egypt in the palace there of the great king Pharaoh.

TO THE TEACHER: Be careful in this lesson not to make too much of dreams. Treat the matter as belonging to another age and another world, when many things were different from what they are nowadays. The main point in this lesson is to show the developing character of Joseph, how well he resisted temptation now that he had to act for himself. Yet do not let the children feel that he had not been to blame for his foolish pride when at home with his brothers. What made his pride the more contemptible at that time was that it was for something on the outside. Now that he was showing real character and knew there was something on the inside to be proud of, he was learning to be humble. The analysis here could be carried out further with advantage.

CHAPTER XV.

The Meeting of Joseph and His Brethren.

In the meantime, I am certain Joseph would be thinking a great deal of his old father Israel, far away there in Canaan, up in the north; and it happened that this famine we have told you about spread beyond Egypt, up to where Israel and his family lived, so that there was a great scarcity in that country as well.

The word had gone abroad how there was still plenty in Egypt owing to the great foresight of king Pharaoh. And so Israel decided to send his sons down to Egypt in order that they might bring provisions back for their need in Canaan. And this is what he said to his sons: "Why do ye look upon one another? Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt; get you down thither and buy from thence that we may live and not die."

And the brothers of Joseph started off down to Egypt, although one of their number was kept behind. You see, Israel had begun to suspect something. While he thought it probable that his youngest child Joseph had been devoured by some wild animal, I fancy he did not quite like the way his sons looked whenever he mentioned the name of Joseph; and furthermore—and this is very sad to think of—he knew that he had been deceitful himself, and thought possibly that his sons might also have acted in this way.

However, after losing Joseph, he had made a great pet of his youngest boy, Benjamin, who was born after they had left Laban, years before. He began to feel towards him in the way he had felt towards Joseph. And so he decided that he would not send Benjamin with the others, saying to himself: "Peradventure lest mischief befall him."

And the ten brothers came to Egypt in order to buy corn. Now, Joseph was the chief officer and had charge of the sale of the corn to all who should come. Just think how hard it must have been for him to control himself when suddenly he walked his ten brothers seeking to buy corn from him. But he knew he must be very quiet for a time and control himself and not make himself known to his brothers. In order to do this, he put on a stern look and used rather rough language, saying: "Whence come you?" and they said, "From the land of Canaan to buy food." They did not know Joseph, however, because he was so much older now and had changed so much during all the years he had lived in Egypt.

Then Joseph said to them, "Ye are spies," meaning by this to suggest that they had not come for the sake of food, but to do some harm to Egypt. But they answered, "We are all one man's sons. We are true men, thy servants are no spies."

Now Joseph knew that they had not been *true men*; and he had to be very careful indeed until he found out just what they were after. In the first place, he saw that his youngest brother was not with them, and so he put them to a test. He said to them: "Ye shall not go forth hence unless your youngest brother come thither. Send one of you and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be bound; that your words may be proved whether there be any truth in you; otherwise I shall be obliged to think ye are spies."

At last, after he had kept them all there for a number of days, he saw that probably it would be impossible for them to send one of their number to get their brother; and so he decided to let the others go, keeping only one of them behind, in order to make sure that the next time they came they would bring their youngest brother. And he said to them: "If ye be true men, bring your youngest brother unto me."

They had begun to feel that a punishment was coming upon them for what they had done to Joseph. I am glad to notice that even in those early times when people did wrong, they became uneasy, their con-

sciences troubled them, and they regretted what they had done. Then Reuben said to them 'Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child? And ye would not hear. Therefore, behold, we are to be punished.'

You see they were talking together in the presence of Joseph, using their own tongue, while Joseph had learned to use the language of the Egyptians. They did not know, therefore, that he understood them.

You may wonder how he could ask about Benjamin without arousing their curiosity or suspicions; but we assume they had been obliged to report about their family, as they were strangers from another country; hence probably it did not surprise them that he should have spoken in this way.

But you can imagine the feeling of Joseph as he heard his brothers talking about him, knowing what they were saying among themselves. For a little while it was more than he could stand. He got to thinking about his dear father, how fond he had been of him; about his home, which he might never see again. He thought so deeply about all this that he was obliged to turn away to hide his tears.

After he could control himself, he came back and explained to them how he should retain Simeon until they should return with their younger brother Benjamin, assuring them that if they did this he would no longer think of them as spies.

In the meantime he gave the order that their sacks should be filled with corn, and that their money should not be taken, but that it should be put back into their sacks. They did not know anything about this, of course, and started homeward on their journey, very much troubled as to what they should tell their father in regard to their brother Simeon, who had been left behind.

On their way home, as they were obliged to open one of their sacks, for food, they found the money lying there in the mouth of the sack. This troubled them very much indeed, because they thought it would look as if they had stolen the money; although we take it for

granted that Joseph had done this out of the kindness of his heart, not wishing to take any money for what was to go back to his own family, or to his own father.

By this time they were a most unhappy set of brothers, you can be sure. But they journeyed on and came at last to the land of Canaan, and approached their father in order to explain to him what had happened. This is what they said to Israel: "The man, the lord of the land, spake roughly to us and took us for spies of the country. We said to him, We are true men, we are no spies; we be twelve brothers, sons of our father; one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan. And the man, the lord of the land, said unto us: Hereby shall I know ye are true men. Leave one of your brethern with me and take corn for the family of your house and go and bring away your youngest brother unto me; then shall I know ye are no spies and are true men. So will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall have traffic in the land."

Poor Israel was unhappy enough now. He did not know what to think. He had lost Joseph, and now it looked to him as if he would have to lose Benjamin. He did not know, either, whether this was all true; whether he could trust what his sons had told him or not. And he cried out: "Ye have bereaved of my children; Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away; all these things are against me."

The punishment for the sins of his early years were enough upon him now—almost greater than he could bear. Then Reuben said to his father: "Slay my two sons if I bring him not to thee; deliver him into my hand and I will bring him to thee again." And he said, "My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead and he is left alone. If mischief befall him by the way in which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs in sorrow to the grave."

They waited a while until the corn and provisions which they had brought from Egypt were exhausted. And Israel said to them, "Go again, buy us a little food." Then Judah spake unto him, saying, "The man

did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face except your brother be with you. If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food, but if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down, for the man said to us, Ye shall not see my face except your brother be with you."

And so Israel grew more and more suspicious and more and more unhappy as he thought about it, not being able any longer to trust his own sons, as he said: "Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?" And they said, "The man asked us of our state and our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive and, Have ye another brother, and we told him according to the tenor of these words. Could we know that he would say, Bring your brother down?"

Alas for Israel! Moaning and sorrowful even yet over the loss of Joseph, he now feared that he must lose Benjamin likewise. But what could they do? There was no food; nothing was left for their flocks and herds and family, and it looked as if they must starve to death. And now Judah said to his father: "Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and thou and also our little ones. I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him; if I bring him not unto thee and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame forever."

It was too late for Israel to refuse. They must have food. There they were at the point of starvation. The flocks would die, and the cattle would die; there would be nothing left for them to eat. And so he had to give in. But he said: "If it must be so now, do this: take of the best fruits of your land in your vessels and carry down to the man a present; and take double money in your hand, both the money that was returned in the mouth of the sacks and other money besides. Take also your brother and arise and go to this man again, and may he release unto you your brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved!"

TO THE TEACHER: Indicate how a general thread of woe or punishment seems to run all through these stories about Joseph and his father Jacob—not as if each person always at once gets what he deserves, but as if there were a kind of judgment in the air hanging over wickedness. This is the lesson of the period which should be brought home to the young people. The somber tone running through the narrative should be imparted as a sentiment. The shading is sad and dark. People do not seem to be happy, and they do not deserve to be, if they are going to tolerate so much wickedness. Again dwell upon the pathetic side of the life of Jacob, the seeming failure in spite of outward prosperity. Indicate the same weakness in the man in the way he had favorites with his children. Touch on the thread of judgment, in the fact that his career began by just such weakness toward himself on the part of his mother. Show a picture of the “Meeting of Joseph and His Brethren.”

MEMORY VERSES: *Me have ye bereaved of my children; Joseph is not and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away; all these things are against me.*

My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead and he is left alone. If mischief befall him by the way in which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs in sorrow to the grave.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Second Journey to Egypt.

And now those brothers, the sons of Israel, were to go back again to see if they could get more food, and to try if they could bring back their brother Simeon; hoping also to learn why it was that the man there in Egypt thought of them as spies and wanted to meet their brother Benjamin. When they had arrived in Egypt, and Joseph had learned that Benjamin was with them, he told the steward to bring them all to his house to have them dine with him there. And the man did as Joseph had told him and brought the men to his home. But the brothers were afraid when they were brought into Joseph's house, not knowing what was going to happen to them. They did not want to go in; and they said to the steward: "We came indeed down at the first time to buy food; and it came to pass when we came to the lodging place that we opened our sacks, and behold, every man's money was in the mouth of the sack, our money in full weight, and we have brought it again, and other money have we brought in our hands to buy food. We know not who put our money in our sacks."

You see, they were afraid they would be accused of stealing the money. But it was going to turn out all right, as the steward said: "Peace be with you; come, and fear not. I had your money." Then he brought Simeon out unto them, and they came into Joseph's house, and water was given them and they washed their feet, and food was provided. Then they made ready the presents when Joseph should arrive, after they had heard that they should take their meal there.

And when Joseph came home, they brought him

the presents which were in their hands into the house and bowed down before him, and he asked them: "Is your father yet alive?" And they answered him: "Thy servant, our father, is well, and yet alive." Then Joseph lifted up his eyes and saw his younger brother, Benjamin, and said, "Is this your younger brother Benjamin, of whom ye spake unto me?" And as he said this it was too much for him. There was his dearest brother whom he had not seen for years. He could not stay with them, he was so overcome, otherwise they would know at once who he was. He had to go away for a while to shed tears. When he was able to control himself, he washed his face and came out and ordered that food should be set out for them. Then Joseph told the steward to fill their sacks with as much corn as they could carry, and to put every man's money in his sack's mouth. And he said something else, that was rather strange: "Put my cup, my silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest."

This of course meant Benjamin. I suppose Joseph did this in order to show his love for his dear brother—the next in age to himself. The time had not come when he thought it best to make himself known to them; but his heart was so full that he had to take some way of showing his feelings; and he did it in this way by giving to Benjamin his precious silver cup.

Then they all departed, the eleven brothers, relieved at last of what they had been afraid of, and happy to think that they could go back and restore Simeon and Benjamin to their father. But in the meantime, Joseph had finally concluded that the time had come to make himself known to them. He was pretty sure now that they had no feeling of hate for him. And so he said to his steward: "Up, follow after them, and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them: Where is my silver cup?" And the man overtook the brethren of Joseph, the sons of Israel, and spoke these words to them—and of course they did not know what to make of it. And they answered: "Behold, the money which we found in our sack's

mouth we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan; how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, let him die, and we also will be thy lord's bondmen."

They hastened to take down every man's sack; and search was made, beginning with the sack of the eldest, going at last to the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Then the brethren rent their clothes. They did not know what to make of it. Once more it struck them that trouble had come again because of their former wickedness. There was nothing to do but to go back to the city. And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house, for he was yet there, and they fell before him on the ground. And Joseph said unto them: "What deed is this that ye have done?" And Judah said: "What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? how shall we clear ourselves? Behold, we are my lord's bondmen, both we and he also with whom the cup is found." And Joseph said: "No, but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my bondman; and as for you; get ye up in peace unto your father."

Here was a sad state of affairs! Benjamin to be retained! What would the old father think? What could they tell him? He would begin to suspect that they had done with their youngest brother as they had done with Joseph. And they felt it would be awful for him to lose Benjamin also. Trouble was upon them now, more than enough of it! And Judah made an appeal to Joseph, not knowing of course whom he was speaking to, saying:

"O, my lord, let thy servant I pray thee speak a word into thy ears. My lord asked his servants, saying, have ye a father or a brother? And we said unto my lord, we have a father, an old man, and the child of his old age, a little one, and his brother is dead. And thou sayest unto thy servants bring him down to me that I may see him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave him, his father would die. And thou said unto thy

servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. And it came to pass that when we came up unto thy servant, my father, we told him the words of my lord. And he said, Go again and buy us a little food, and we said, We cannot go down if our youngest brother be not with us; and thy servant our father said unto us, One of my children went from me, and I said, Surely he is torn to pieces, and I have not seen him since, and if ye take this one also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs in sorrow to the grave. Now therefore, when I come to thy servant, my father, and the lad be not with us, seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life, he will die and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant my father in sorrow to the grave. Therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brethren; for how shall I go up to my father and the lad be not with me? lest I see the evil which shall come upon my father."

Remember, it was Judah saying this to the very one whom he and his brothers had sold into slavery in Egypt. You can see what Joseph had found out at last—that Judah was willing to stay there himself as a bondman, in order that his younger brother Benjamin might go back to his old father. It was plain that the men were different from what they had been when they sold him to the Ishmaelites years and years before.

But it had all come out as Joseph had hoped it would come out. If he had not done this, he would never have known whether his brothers had repented of what they had done to him. See what a good thing it was that he had waited up to this time before making himself known. It must have been hard enough indeed not to have at once sent word to his old father that he was alive and prospering.

It is not easy for us to understand how a speech like this could have come from Judah, because it shows what a change had taken place in the man's heart after

all these years. But the time had come when Joseph could restrain himself no longer.

There he was, alone in the land of Egypt, among a people to which he did not belong. He had been thinking for years of the time when he could return alone to his home and to his kindred in the land of Canaan and see his dear old father once more. And so he ordered that everybody else should leave the room where they were, save himself and his brothers, and there stood no man with him while Joseph made himself known to his brethren. The tears were running down his face as he said: "I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?"

You can fancy what a shock it must have been to those men there—his elder brothers. At first, they were afraid. They wanted to go away from his presence. It was the conscience within them awakening and stirring them to the memory of how wickedly they had acted. And Joseph cried out: "Come near to me, I pray you." And they came near. And he said: "I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now, therefore, be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither. For it has all turned out well. Haste ye and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph: Come down unto me; tarry not; and thou shalt dwell nearby in the land of Goshen, thou and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks and thy herds and all that thou hast, and there will I nourish thee through the famine, for the famine is not yet over."

Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck, and they all began to talk together.

TO THE TEACHER: There is no special lesson to be drawn from this chapter save in the generous spirit manifested by Joseph. There might be some questioning as to the essential traits of the character of Joseph in contrast with the other brothers. Show how the spirit of Abraham seemed to reappear in the

attitude of gentle courtesy on the part of this grandson as seen in his words and behavior. It could also be hinted that perhaps Joseph was now realizing that he had been somewhat to blame, and therefore felt more ready to forgive. He had learned a sad lesson from his boyish pride. Touch on the filial feeling he displayed in the language used about his old father.

MEMORY VERSE: *I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?*

CHAPTER XVII.

The Death of Israel.

Soon it was made known to Pharaoh the king what had happened, because Joseph was such an important man now in Egypt. And Pharaoh, who was very fond of Joseph, told his brothers to go back into Canaan and bring their father and their families down into Egypt, where they should be well provided for. This is what King Pharaoh said to them: "Now thou art commanded, this do ye: take wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father and come, for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours."

Then Joseph provided them with wagons according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provisions for the way, with raiment and silver and money as they needed. Besides this, he sent his father a great present to show his love for him.

You can be sure that they were only too glad, these brethren, to get back into the land of Canaan and to tell their father that Joseph was alive. They knew how ashamed they would be when they had to make it known to him; but they were sorry for it all now, and years had gone by. What they wanted to do was to go to their father and tell him about Joseph's power in the land, and persuade him to go with all the rest of the family and live down there in Egypt.

We can imagine how glad at heart Israel would be at the tidings. But he had suffered a great deal and had also learned a great deal from sad experience. What is more, his own sad life had made him suspicious. Therefore, when they told him, saying, "Joseph is yet alive and is a ruler down in Egypt," the old

man's heart fainted and he would not believe it. Then they told him the words that Joseph had said to them; and when Israel saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him and the others down into Egypt, his heart revived and he said: "It is enough! Joseph, my son, is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die."

And so they set out, Israel with his sons and their wives and their little ones, and all they could take with them. Altogether, it is said, there were sixty-six people who went down to Egypt.

In the meantime, what do you suppose Joseph was doing? Do you think he staid at home, waiting till his father should come? No; he was not that kind of a son, although he had been a spoiled child. All that was gone by long ago. At heart he had been true; and since he had come to Egypt he had been a brave and honest man, longing each day and each year once more to see his old father Israel.

Just as soon, therefore, as he knew they were coming down to Egypt, he got his chariot ready and went out to greet his father. And when they met, he fell on Israel's neck and wept a long while. And Israel said unto Joseph: "Now let me die since I have seen thy face and thou art yet alive." And Joseph said unto his brethren and to his father: "I will go up and and tell Pharaoh and say unto him, My brethren and my father's house are come unto me with their flocks and their herds and all they have." Then Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, saying: "My father and brethren, their flocks, their herds and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan, and behold, they are in the land of Goshen." And Pharaoh the king came to them and they said to him: "To sojourn in the land are we come, for there is no pasture for thy servants' flocks, for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan; now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen." And Pharaoh said unto Joseph these words: "Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee. In the best of the land make thy father and thy brethren dwell. In the land of Goshen let them dwell."

And Joseph was very anxious that the king, his master, should meet Israel, his father, and talk with him. Hence he arranged it and brought in Israel, his father, into the presence of the king. Now Israel was a very old man, and so he placed his hands on the head of Pharaoh and blessed him. And Pharaoh said unto Israel: "How many are the years of thy life?" and Israel said unto Pharaoh: "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are one hundred and thirty years." Then they parted, and Israel went to live with his sons in Goshen.

You can see that Israel had been a very old man, a hundred and thirty years of age, when he came to Egypt; but he was happy with his sons and family, and with his youngest boys, Joseph and Benjamin, restored to him—so happy, indeed, that he lived seventeen years longer, until he was a hundred and forty-seven years old.

Then came the time for him to die. But he did not want that his body should be buried there in Egypt. He remembered his father Isaac, and his mother Rebekah, and his grandfather Abraham, where they were buried. And as he drew near his end he called his son Joseph to him and said: "If I have found grace in thy sight put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt. But I will lie with my fathers and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt and bury me with my fathers." And Joseph said: "I will do as thou hast said." And Israel continued: "Promise me," and Joseph promised him.

Then Joseph brought his two sons to the bedside of the dying father Israel. And Israel beheld Joseph's sons and said: "Who are these?" and Joseph said unto him: "They are my sons." And Israel said: "Bring them close and I will bless them."

Now the eyes of Israel were dimmed for age so that he could not see. So Joseph brought them near to him and Israel blessed them and embraced them, and, placing his hands on their heads, he gave them his blessing.

When the old man was dead, Joseph said to Pharaoh: "My father made me promise, saying, in the grave which I have prepared for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me. Now, therefore, let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again." And Pharaoh said: "Go." And Joseph went up into the land of Canaan, and all his brethren with him, and buried his father, and they laid the body of Israel away in the cave in the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field, a long while before as a burial place, from Ephron.

Then, when they had all come back again, the brethren began to be a little afraid of what Joseph might do, thinking still of the great wrong they had committed against him in former times. And they came to him asking his forgiveness, and Joseph said: "Fear not; it is true you meant evil against me, but it has turned out well. Now, therefore, fear not; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he spake kindly unto them and forgave them.

TO THE TEACHER: At the end of this lesson there should be a careful review of the whole narrative concerning Jacob or "Israel." It could be shown how often it happens that prosperity does not bring happiness, especially where there is a recollection of some wrong or mistake in one's past life. The whole narrative could be used as a lesson on the evils of deceit and what a dark shadow it may throw, not only over the one guilty of it, but over many others as well—how it spreads and perpetuates itself in a thousand ways. The haunting doubt with which Jacob met the assurance that Joseph was alive further illustrates the same point, because Jacob's life and conduct had led him to distrust others. Show a picture of Joseph meeting "Israel," or of "Israel" blessing the sons of Joseph.

MEMORY VERSE: *Now let me die since I have seen thy face and thou art yet alive.*

PART III.

EGYPT AND THE WILDERNESS.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Birth of Moses.

I have been telling you for a long while about those patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; how they behaved; what happened to them; and how, at last, Jacob, afterwards renamed Israel, came with all his family to dwell in Egypt; how he died there and how they carried his body back to Canaan and buried it in the cave of Machpelah.

Now we shall narrate further how this large family went on growing year after year, becoming greater in numbers and more and more important in Egypt. All those belonging to this great family were called "Israelites"; and so we must begin by telling you about the "Children of Israel" in Egypt.

For a time you can be sure they were happy and contented down there, even if they were far away from their former home in the land of Canaan. You see, Joseph had behaved so well and become such an important person under the king of Egypt that all the members of his family were treated very kindly. As you remember, they had taken up their home in what was called Goshen, where they had plenty of land for themselves and for their flocks and herds. At the same time you must not forget that they did not have the same religion as the people of Egypt, but went on, I am glad to say, thinking of the Lord, the Ruler of the World, who had taken care of them when they were in the land of Canaan.

All went on well for a while, as we have said. Just how long, I do not know;—perhaps, a long while after the days of Joseph and Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, who had been so kind to Joseph, and who had invited the Israelites to come down and live in Egypt.

But by and by trouble came; and it grew worse and worse. This great family of Israelites became larger and larger, until at last it is said they numbered several hundred thousand people. Now, that is a great many persons. They had gained a good deal of wealth and were becoming more and more important in Egypt, until finally the people who had lived there, before Israel came down with his family, began to be jealous. They said to themselves: "Perhaps, by and by these Children of Israel will rise up and conquer us and take possession of our whole country and rule over us; and we ought not to let this come to pass."

At first, of course, they only said these things to themselves, without doing anything. But they grew more and more uneasy, and it may be also that the Israelites became rather proud of their success and their prosperity. Perhaps they had better habits and behaved themselves better than the Egyptians, and this made them more successful in a great many ways. It very often happens, however, you know, when people behave well or become successful or prosperous that they grow proud; and I am a little afraid for this reason that the Israelites began to show some pride. At any rate, at last there came a king over Egypt who had forgotten all about Joseph and what had been done by him a long while before; or if he remembered about Joseph he did not care. He made up his mind that the time had come to do something in order to check their prosperity. Kings in those days had a great deal of power, and they could do almost anything they pleased, so that it was a sorry day when this king arose, who was unfriendly to the Israelites.

This is what he said to the people of Egypt: "Behold, the people of the Children of Israel may become more and mightier than we are; come, let us deal wisely with them lest they multiply and it come to

pass that when we have war they join themselves unto our enemies and fight against us and do us harm."

Just as soon as the Children of Israel heard about this they were very much troubled. There was nothing for them to do. They were in a country belonging to another people and ruled over by a king who was not of their own race. Up to this time all had gone very well with them. Now there was a change. The new king had made up his mind that he would make slaves of the Children of Israel, putting heavy burdens upon them, and set them to very hard and tiresome work. And so he placed taskmasters over them, who were Egyptians, to afflict these people with heavy burdens.

In those days the people of Egypt were building new cities, and the Children of Israel were made to do the hard work in building these new cities for the Egyptians. In this way the king hoped that a great many of them would die, so that they would become less in number and be, therefore, much less dangerous. But it did not have that effect. The Children of Israel went on growing more and more in numbers; and the king of Egypt grew more and more troubled as to what he should do. Then he tried to make the Israelites work harder and harder, and to make their lives bitter with hard service. In mortar and in brick and in all manner of service in the field they were made to serve with rigor.

The Israelites had now become slaves. They were no longer their own masters, and were really owned by the king of Egypt. The happy times when they had first settled in the land were now all gone by. The little children had to work just like their fathers and mothers. They could not go out and play like the little Egyptian children. They no longer had nice homes, such as they had when Joseph was alive, and when they lived under the former king Pharaoh. Now they had hard beds, or had to sleep on the ground and live in huts or wherever they could find a place to rest. As I have said, when the little children grew older and wanted to go and play, instead they had to

work along with their fathers and mothers. And so great trouble indeed had come upon the poor Israelites. I do not mean to say that all this was a punishment for their pride, although I feel quite sure that some of this would not have happened to them if they had always shown the right kind of spirit. But even when people behave well, sometimes troubles have to come, especially when they are dealing with other selfish people who dislike them or hate them. Up to this time the Children of Israel, however, had still continued to remember their Lord the Ruler of the World, and had not done anything really very bad, save by showing that spirit of pride which I have told you about.

The Great Ruler meant surely by and by to save them by taking them away from the Egyptians and having them go back to the land of Canaan. You remember, that country had been promised to the family of Abraham, and the people felt that their Lord always kept his promises. It may be that the Ruler of the World was disappointed because the people themselves had not long before that time gone back to the land of Canaan which had been promised them; and this may be one reason why he had allowed them to get into all this trouble. They had come down to Egypt mostly because of the famine; and perhaps they ought to have gone back to Canaan just as soon as the famine was over. But they found themselves quite happy down there in Egypt with plenty of food for themselves and all their flocks and herds, and so they staid there among strangers. You remember the Lord at that time did not want his people to stay among strangers; he wanted that they should stay among themselves and learn to do right, instead of following the bad habits of other people. And I am very much afraid that the Israelites had begun to follow some of these bad habits among the Egyptians.

But altogether the Israelites were now having a bad time of it and we cannot help feeling very sorry for them indeed. I am sure they talked a great deal about the old promise that was made to Abraham, how all

the earth should be blessed through their family, and also how they should inherit the land of Canaan. But you see, they had done nothing themselves in order to help carry out that promise. They ought to have thought about this a long while before, when they were not slaves.

Now the worst trouble of all came to the poor Children of Israel, the Israelites down there in Egypt. The king of Egypt had made up his mind that something definite must be done in order to keep them from growing in numbers and becoming dangerous; and so he gave a terrible order to his officers. He told them that they should put to death all the little children if they were boys, as soon as they were born, while the little girls should be spared. This is what the king commanded: "Every son that is born to the Israelites ye shall cast into the river, but every daughter ye shall save alive." Then there was woe upon the children of Israel. Just think what that meant. Fathers and mothers were to lose their little ones and not to have any sons to grow up to take their places and to provide for them when they were old. Mothers were to see their little boys torn from their arms and thrown into the river. And there was weeping and wailing among all the Israelites. If you had been there at that time and gone into their homes you would have seen mothers everywhere with tears running down their faces; and fathers while they were at work, with tears in their eyes also, all of them thinking of their little ones who were to be cast into the river, that great river which flows through the land of Egypt.

But I must tell you about what happened to one of those little boys belonging to one of the families of the Israelites. In one of these homes a little boy was born and for a few days his mother was very happy indeed. She held her child in her arms, looking at it and kissing its sweet face and thinking how dear it was to her; but every now and then the tears would come to her eyes and she would look away in fear, lest the Egyptians should see her little boy and carry him away to be thrown into the river. She made up her

mind that she would try to save the little one if possible, and not let the wicked Egyptians know anything about her boy. For a time she succeeded, and the Egyptians did not find out about this little child. But as time went on, week after week and month after month, the mother grew more and more anxious. At last, when the little boy was three months old it became known to her that she could not hide him from them any longer. She was quite sure that the Egyptians would find her little boy and take him away.

Then what do you suppose this mother did? It was something very curious. We should never have thought of it! She set to work and made a little cradle which was called an ark, out of the reeds or bulrushes, as they were termed, growing by the banks of the river; and she covered it over with slime and with pitch so that it was a kind of cradle, or ark. Then she put the child in the ark and she laid it in the flags or reeds down by the brink of the great river. She had made up her mind that if she kept the child it would be taken away from her; and she thought perhaps if she put the child down by the river's brink in the ark of bulrushes, perhaps some Egyptian might find the little one, and not knowing that it was an Israelite, adopt it and bring up the little one, instead of throwing it into the river. In the meantime she placed the child's sister to watch what would happen.

And what would you fancy took place? Well, I will tell you. It seems that just about that time the daughter of the king of Egypt came down to bathe in the river, and her maidens walked along by the river's side. And behold, she saw the ark among the flags and sent her hand-maiden to fetch it. The mother had covered it over very carefully, so that this princess did not know what was in the ark. She had just noticed it there and had wanted to look at it. And so she raised the cover of the tiny ark, and looked in, and there she saw the little child. And as she looked, the eyes of the child opened and the poor little one began to cry, longing for his mother. Not far away, the poor mother may have heard the cry, yet dared not go near.

But the fair princess stood looking at the child in

the ark and her heart was touched. She said to her maidens around her: "This is one of the children of the Hebrews"—meaning the Israelites. Then the sister said to the princess: "Shall I go and call thee a nurse from one of the women of Israel, that she may nurse the child for thee?" And the princess said to her: "Go." And the maid went and found the child's mother. Just think how happy that mother must have been! She was to be called and asked to act as a nurse for her own child, her little boy. And he was not to be cast into the river after all. The princess did not know, of course, that this was the child's mother and the mother dared not tell her. But now the princess said to her: "Take this child away and nurse it for me and I will pay thee wages." Then the mother took the child and nursed it, and the little boy went on growing and was treated as if he were the son of this beautiful princess, the daughter of the King of Egypt. And do you know what name was given to the little boy? Why, they called him Moses, because in her language it meant "Being drawn up out of the water." You may have heard already about "Moses in the bulrushes," and the beautiful princess who saved him and brought him up as her own child. I tell you about this because by and by Moses became a very important person and you will want to know all about him.

TO THE TEACHER: The account of the sufferings of the Israelites may be expanded somewhat. But the blame must not be cast wholly on the Egyptians. Point out the dangers from prosperity in the rise of pride and arrogance. Make a good deal of the story of the birth of Moses, showing a picture, perhaps, of the "bulrushes" along the Nile, and of the women coming down to the river. Pictures of some of the monuments could also be introduced with illustrations of slaves at work on palaces and temples. The narrative must now be somewhat more continuous. Yet it would better be broken up into special topics as far as this can be done conveniently. The divisions of the subject could be altered if desired.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Burning Bush.

Now you must hear something about that boy Moses. As you remember, he belonged to the people of Israel. But by and by as he grew older he had been taken away from his mother and carried to the home of the princess, where he had been brought up as an Egyptian. Yet there can be no doubt that as the boy began to talk before he had been carried to the palace of the King of Egypt, his mother must have told him who he was, and how she had saved him. She had warned him that he must not say anything about this, lest he should be put to death. And so when the time came for him to be carried away there was nothing to be done. He had to bid his mother good-bye and go off and live in the beautiful home of the princess, where he was to be educated as an Egyptian. I suppose if it had been any one else but a princess, the daughter of the king, this would not have been allowed; because the king had commanded that all the boys born to the Israelites should be cast into the river.

In the meantime everything was growing worse and worse for the poor Children of Israel. Their tasks were becoming harder and harder, and the Egyptians were treating them more and more like slaves. There were fewer children in their homes now and they had less and less hope. In the meantime there was Moses who was not being treated as a slave, but as a prince; yet he never forgot that he belonged to the people of Israel, and that he was not an Egyptian. He knew how his people were suffering; how they were being made slaves, while he was being brought up

as a prince. And he kept thinking about this a great deal, although he did not forget how kindly he had been treated by the princess, because he was not an ungrateful boy.

One day, however, after he had grown up, he was in one of those cities where the people of Israel were working night and day as slaves; and he looked on until it seemed as if it was more than his heart could bear. He did not know what he could do. He thought of going back and pleading with the princess, asking her if she would not try and do something for his people. But he knew that while she had been kind to him she could not influence the king or the rest of the Egyptians, who had become selfish and hardhearted and cared nothing whatever for the poor Israelites. And as he stood looking on, he saw one of the Egyptians striking one of the Israelites and just about to kill him. This was more than Moses could stand. He turned to save the man of his own race and in doing so he slew the Egyptian. Then he did not know what he was to do. He was quite sure that if it became known how he had slain an Egyptian, he would be put to death, even if he had been brought up as the son of the princess. He looked this way and that, asking himself what course he had better take. Should he go back and plead with the princess? But he said to himself, "No, it will be of no use. I must fly."

Hence Moses had to leave his beautiful home where he had had everything he wanted, and had been treated as a prince for many years. He had to flee and go into another country, where the people should not know him. And he went to the land of Midian. But even when he came there he did not know how he should be treated. He was not sorry for what he had done. He knew it was right. He had saved the life of one of his fellow men; a man who had belonged to his own race and who was about to be killed by the wicked Egyptian. Moses was not a man to regret having done what was right. He never for once thought about that beautiful palace and wished him-

self back there. But yet, here he was, alone in the land of Midian, with nothing to drink nor eat, and not knowing how he was going to take care of himself. He came at last to a well in that country. And as he stood there by the well a number of young women came to draw water to give drink to their fathers' flocks. But some other shepherds came up and drove them away. This was anything but a brave and manly thing for young men to attack those young women and drive them away. Surely, we cannot help thinking that such men must have been cowards. But there was Moses all alone, looking on. And so he stepped in and attacked the men. And although there were a number of them and he was all alone, he succeeded and they fled; so that the young women could go back and give water to their flocks.

Then Moses came forward and helped them draw water. This was a kind act and those young women felt that a great service had been done them by this brave young man, Moses. They went home, therefore, to their father and told him how a man had rescued them and how he had stayed to help them water their flocks. This is what they said to their father: "An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherd; and moreover he drew water for us and watered the flocks." And he said unto his daughters, "Where is he? Why is it that ye have left the man? Call him, that he may come and eat bread." At once they went and called Moses. They liked him very much indeed for what he had done for them. And Moses felt at home with them. It quite often happens, as you know, that people feel very kindly toward the persons for whom they have done a service. Surely Moses liked this man and his family all the more; and he stayed with them and the father gave him one of his daughters to become his wife; and her name was Zipporah. And there was Moses with his wife Zipporah, living in the Land of Midian alone, far away from his own people, not daring to go back, lest he should be put to death by the king of the Egyptians.

While he was staying in Midian, however, he had a peculiar experience; and it became the turning point in his life. It seems that at one time when in care of his flocks he brought them to a place called Mount Horeb. And as he was staying there we are told how he observed a flame of fire coming out of the midst of a bush. He looked and behold the bush burned with fire and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said: "I will turn aside now and see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." Then as he drew near he heard a voice saying to him: "Moses! Moses!" And he answered, "Here am I." And the voice said: "Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

And Moses felt that it was the voice of the Great Ruler speaking to him. Out of the burning bush came a charge to him that he should go back to Egypt, see the king there and ask to bring all the Israelites over to this mountain where they could worship. This, of course, was a fearful responsibility. Think what it would mean for Moses to go and appear before the great king of Egypt and make such a demand? What could he say and how should he address the king? As he stood there thinking, he answered to the voice: "I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; for I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue." Then came the reply from the voice: "Is there not Aaron thy brother? I know that he can speak well. Thou shalt speak unto him and put words into his mouth. I will be with thy mouth and with his mouth and will teach you what ye shall do, and he shall be thy spokesman."

There was nothing left for Moses now but to go forward and obey. He knew at any rate that the men who sought his life in Egypt were now all dead. He took his wife and his sons, therefore, and returned to that country.

Then he found his brother Aaron, according to the charge laid upon him, and they went in and told Pharaoh, the king of Egypt: "Thus saith the Lord, Let

my people go that they may hold a feast unto me in the Wilderness." And Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord and I will not let Israel go. Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, loose the people from their work? Get ye unto your burdens."

And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people and their officers, saying: "Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick as heretofore; let them go and gather straw for themselves; let there more work be laid upon the men that they may labor therein; and let them not regard vain words."

This was hard indeed upon the children of Israel. They were expected henceforth to make their bricks without straw, as it was said to them: "Get you straw where ye can find it; go therefore now and work; for there shall no straw be given you, but ye shall deliver the tale of bricks." And so it was that the sufferings of the people were greater than ever. ,

TO THE TEACHER: Tell the fore part of the chapter simply as a portion of the general narrative. Touch upon the sterling character of Moses in standing by his people and being willing to give up the life of the palace for their sakes. You could expand upon the honors and luxuries he would have to lose, and what it meant for him to go and dwell in a strange country and to put up with severe hardships after the life of a palace. The story of the "burning bush" is classic and must not be overlooked. It would be better not to introduce any pictures in connection with it as this would make it too realistic. Call attention to the phrase "making bricks without straw" because of the way this has passed into everyday speech.

MEMORY VERSE: *Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.*

CHAPTER XX.

Moses and Pharaoh.

We come now to a strange and curious part of our story. It will seem extraordinary enough, as if it belonged quite to another world. We know, however, that something terrible did happen and punishment came upon the wicked Egyptians for their selfishness.

You see, they had made slaves of the poor Israelites, treating them not like human beings, but as if they were brutes, making them do the harder kind of work, and beating them as a man would his camels. They kept all the best food for themselves, giving to the Israelites only enough to save them from starving to death. They showed no pity and no mercy. They were very selfish and bad; and when people are thoroughly selfish, as they were, it is pretty sure that a time will come when they will be sorry for it. And the time came when the Egyptians were sorry enough for the way they had acted, and were only too glad to let the Israelites go.

Moses and Aaron once more addressed the king of Egypt and told him the command of the Great Ruler, that he was to let the people go. And then there came to pass the awful "Plagues" which you may have heard about. I will tell you about some of them. You see, they were as a punishment for the wicked selfishness of the Egyptians, and the selfishness of the wicked Egyptian king.

The king would not listen for a moment to Moses and Aaron, and refused what they asked for. And so the Lord over All said to Moses: "The king's heart is stubborn, he refuses to let the people go; get thee

unto him in the morning; Lo, he goeth out unto the water, and thou shalt stand by the river's brink to meet him. Take thou thy rod in thine hand and thou shalt say unto him: the Lord, the friend of the Israelites hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go; and behold, heretofore thou hast not hearkened. Now thus saith the Lord: Behold, I will smite with this rod upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink, and the Egyptians shall loathe to drink the water of the river."

And Moses did just as he was told. He lifted up the rod and smote the waters of the river in the sight of the king and his servants; and we are told that all the waters in the river were turned to blood, and the fish that were in the river died and the river stank; and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river, and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

This was certainly something awful to happen there in that country; and we might feel sure that after what took place, the king of Egypt would be only too glad to let Moses and Aaron have their way, and allow the Children of Israel to depart. And so after all this, Moses and Aaron thought that the king of Egypt would give his consent. But no, the king's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them. He turned and went back into his house; neither did he lay even this to heart.

Then there was another plague. The rod was stretched forth over the waters of Egypt, and we are told that frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. They came into the palace of the king; into his bed chamber; into the houses of his servants; into their ovens. All the land was smitten with frogs.

This was more than the king of Egypt could endure. And he said to Moses and Aaron: "Entreat the Lord that he take away the frogs from me and my people, and I will let the people go." And they said to the king: "Be it according to thy word." And the frogs died out of the houses and out of the courts and out

of the fields. But I am sorry to say that just as soon as the country was relieved of the plague, the king of Egypt, overcome by his selfishness, hardened his heart and refused to keep his promise. He would not let the children of Israel go. And it was necessary for another plague to come upon Egypt.

By this time we almost begin to feel pity for these selfish people and for their foolishly selfish king. They were getting the punishment they deserved. And the Lord said this to Moses: "Rise up early in the morning and stand before the king; lo he goeth forth to the water, and say unto him: "Thus saith the Lord: Let my people go; else if thou wilt not let my people go, I will send swarms of flies upon thy servants and upon thy people and into the houses of the Egyptians. But in the land of Goshen that day no swarm of flies shall be there."

And all this happened, as we are told, and there came grievous swarms of flies, and the whole land was corrupted by reason of this most fearful plague. Then for a time it looked as if the king would give in. He was surely being punished enough. And he said to Moses and Aaron: "I will let you go;" and Moses said, "Behold, I go out from thee and I will entreat the Lord that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh and his servants, and from his people; but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go forth."

And then, can you really believe it?—when the swarms of flies had departed, the king changed his mind again, becoming more selfish than ever. He hardened his heart this time also, and would not let the people go. So there was another awful plague which came upon the cattle of Egypt, and nearly all the cattle of Egypt died.

It was the same story over again. The king of Egypt would consent until the plague was removed; and then he would change his mind and would not let the people go. There was a plague of Darkness, which you would surely think would bring the Egyptians to their senses. We are told that the whole

land was covered by a thick darkness, "a darkness so thick that it could be felt."

But the thick darkness that hung over the Egyptians for a number of days, and the plague which killed the cattle—all this did not move the king of the Egyptians. He kept on getting more and more selfish, promising to let the people go during the time that the plague lasted, and then when it was over, breaking his promise.

Finally came the last and most awful punishment, something too terrible to think of. But it brought the king of Egypt and his people to their senses and made them cry—"we have had enough." This is what Moses and Aaron at last said to the king: "Thus saith the Lord: About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt and all the first-born children in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon the throne, even unto the first-born of the maid servant that is behind the mill, and all the first-born of cattle; and there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt such as there was none like it nor shall be like it any more."

But the king of Egypt would not listen, and the evil came. First, however, the children of Israel had to be told what they were to do. Moses and Aaron felt quite sure now, if this punishment fell upon the Egyptians, that the time would come when the Israelites would be allowed to go forth from the land.

And this is what the Lord said to Moses and Aaron: "Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month, they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to their father's houses, a lamb for a house; and if the household be too little for a lamb, let him and his neighbor next to him take it according to the number of souls, every man according to his eating shall make count for the lamb. And they shall take his blood and put it on the two side posts and upon the lintel and upon the houses wherein the people shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night roasted with fire. And thus shall ye eat it; with your shoes on your feet and with your staff in

your hand, and ye shall eat it in haste. For I will go through the land of Egypt in that night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are, and when I see the blood I will pass over you and there shall be no plague of this kind upon you to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt."

And so the Children of Israel were ready. They had made up their minds to follow Moses and Aaron, and to obey. The night arrived when this awful doom was to fall upon Egypt. And the Children of Israel by their households took each a lamb and killed it and put some of its blood upon the door posts and upon the lintels, and then cooked the food and ate it in the night, all dressed and ready to go forth as soon as they should be summoned by Moses.

Midnight came. And it came to pass that the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of the king of the Egyptians that sat on his throne, unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon, and all the first-born of the cattle. And the king of Egypt rose up in the night, and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And the king called for Moses and Aaron and said: "Both ye and the Children of Israel, go: take both your flocks and your herds, and begone." And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people and sent them out of the land in haste, for they said: "Or we be all dead men."

TO THE TEACHER: The ethical element in the story of the "Plagues" is feeble. It only suggests how punishment in the long run somehow hangs over selfishness or wickedness. But children ought to learn the story, because its details have entered so intimately into the language of Christendom. Something might be said of the human nature shown by the king in giving in when in trouble, but falling back into selfishness as soon as the trouble is over. This could be

pointed out as a common trait with a great many people who may be only frightened into doing better, but who do not really change *at heart*. It must rest with the teacher or the head of the school where these lessons are used, to decide as to how far this narrative should be taken as literal history, or how far as simply tradition.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Flight of the Israelites.

And now you would like to know what happened to the Children of Israel—where they went, what they did, how they behaved and how soon they came to Palestine or the Land of Canaan.

Well, for their sakes, I am sorry to say, it was a long time; because they did not behave very well. They were very much like children; and it was necessary that they should learn how to obey before they were allowed to go back to the Land of Canaan, the land of Abraham, Isaac and of Jacob, or, as they now thought of it, "the Promised Land."

I have no doubt as they went forth from the land of Egypt that they began to think at once how, in a few days, they were to come to the country "flowing with milk and honey," where they could go and have plenty to eat and drink, with no more trouble, no more hard work, no more slavery. But if they had been allowed to go there at once they would probably not have been able to conquer the land, and would have become selfish and wicked, just like the Egyptians.

Unfortunately they had formed many bad habits while they had been in Egypt, and they had learned many bad habits from the Egyptians themselves. And so it was going to be a good many years before they would be allowed to enter the Land of Canaan.

First, they were to go into what was then known as the "Wilderness." You may like to know how many of these people there were. Well, there were more than you could count. You see, they had been living so long in Egypt—it was said that it was now four hundred and thirty years since Israel came down with his family—that they had increased and multiplied enormously. At this time we are told they numbered

six hundred thousand men and women, besides the little children. And now, as we are assured, it came to pass at the end of four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day, it came to pass, that the Children of Israel went out from the land of Egypt.

But then something else happened. There was the king of the Egyptians, and the people; and they got to thinking that if the Israelites went away they would not have them for slaves any more. And they began to say that perhaps after all there would be no more plagues. The king therefore decided to go out with his army and capture the Children of Israel and bring them back again—the six hundred thousand with all their little ones.

And the king of Egypt said to himself: "What is this that I have done that I have let the Children of Israel go from serving us?" And he made ready his chariot and took his soldiers with him, six hundred chosen chariots, and captains over all of them. And he set out to pursue the Israelites with his horsemen and his army, and finally he overtook them encamped by the Red Sea.

Then the Children of Israel looked back and they were frightened enough. They had no chariots and no swords to fight with, and they knew nothing about warfare. There they were, by the waters of the Red Sea with the army of the king of Egypt coming down upon them.

You observe now just how like children they were. Instead of being trustful after being saved in this way, they turned in anger upon Moses and said: "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the Wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us to carry us forth out of Egypt? Did we not say to thee, Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians? For this would have been better than that we should die here in the Wilderness."

This surely must have been discouraging to Moses and Aaron. But something happened which saved the Israelites. You see, they were right up at the north end of the Red Sea, where the waters were not very

deep; and sometimes the winds blow there for a long while very hard, and blow the waters away further down, leaving the bottom of the sea bare. And this happened just at the very time when the Israelites were there on the banks, while they were waiting, thinking they would all be killed by the army of the King of Egypt. And while they were watching the great cloud of dust made by the chariots advancing, the wind started to blow, and it blew harder and harder, until the waters began gradually to disappear, and by and by, when the Israelites turned away from watching the cloud of dust made by the advancing army, behold, where the water had been, lo, there was no water at all; nothing but the bottom of the sea.

Then you can be sure the Israelites were ashamed for the way they had talked and blamed Moses and Aaron. And they started at once to cross to the other side. The winds were blowing very strongly, and the waters were kept far away; and so the Israelites were able, the whole six hundred thousand of them, with their children, to reach the other side of the Red Sea in safety.

Just at this time, when they were safe on the other side, the winds stopped blowing, and the waters began to come back. The king of Egypt was furious when he saw the Israelites escaping, and he started therefore to cross the Red Sea with his chariots and his soldiers. And at the very time when they were crossing, the waters came back with a rush, overthrowing the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. As we are told: the waters returned and covered the chariots and horsemen; even all the host of the king of Egypt that went down pursuing the Israelites, and there remained not so much as one of them. In this way the Children of Israel were saved that day from the hands of the Egyptians. They had crossed the Red Sea and were safe on the other side, and the Egyptians with their king had been drowned in the waters.

Surely now the Israelites had reason to be grateful to Moses and to Aaron and to their Lord, the Ruler of the World, after the way they had been preserved

and set free from the yoke of slavery. And what do you suppose they did? As soon as they were landed on the other side in safety and there was no longer any danger of being pursued by the Egyptians, I am glad to say that they rested and sang a hymn of praise to the Ruler of the World—all the people together, six hundred thousand of them, with the children, for I am sure the children sang at the same time. They all took up the words, singing and shouting for very joy: "I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my song, and he is become my salvation; the Lord is his name. Who is like unto the Lord? Who is like unto the Lord in his gloriousness and holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"

You see, the people did not feel proud at that time, as if they had done all this themselves. They had suffered so long and been so unhappy in all their troubles, that they were only too glad to have escaped, and took no praise to themselves for it. They felt that they owed it all to the Great Ruler of the World.

TO THE TEACHER: Dwell in this lesson on the characteristic of "childishness." Have a good deal to say about the habit of finding fault with everything. Ask why it is that grown people do this less than children, and whether children should not try to conquer the habit. This point is to come out repeatedly in these stories. Ask what is meant by "whining," and why such conduct is contemptible. Begin to comment on the patience of Moses. Perhaps now there might be some maps introduced showing the Red Sea and the peninsular of Sinai, as well as the neighboring country of Egypt. Speak of the "crossing of the Red Sea" as a great event in the history of the world. The song at the end might be learned by heart.

MEMORY VERSE: *Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Did we not say to thee, Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians?*

CHAPTER XXII.

The Trials of Moses.

And now the wanderings of the poor Children of Israel were to begin. All the while they were thinking that at any moment they might be led into the Promised Land. But instead of getting there it turned out that they had to stay in what was known as "the Wilderness" for about forty years; so that by the end of that time those who had been little children when they had crossed the Red Sea, were already in middle life with their own families and their own children; and many men in middle life who had crossed the Red Sea, had grown old and died there in the Wilderness and were not allowed to enter the Promised Land.

You may wonder why all this should be, that while they were grown men and women, they could act like children. It was because they could not be trusted yet, and it would not have been safe or well if they had been allowed to enter the Promised Land. A person can never be trusted or allowed to take care of himself, until he can get over the habit of finding fault or complaining about everything unpleasant that may happen. As long as people go on in this way they really do not know how to take care of themselves and are children, even if they are otherwise advanced in years. I do not know why it is that some people always will be finding fault instead of going bravely ahead and making the best of things, doing right, and taking whatever happens in a brave and manly or womanly spirit.

You know when something unpleasant occurs to a young child he often just sits down and cries. That

is the child's way. Although they were grown people, it was just the way the Children of Israel acted while they were in the Wilderness. Even if they were to receive the Promised Land by and by, yet they would be obliged to proceed and conquer it from the wicked people who lived there. And if they had gone to the Land of Canaan without being able to endure trials, and always wanting to sit down and cry when anything unpleasant happened, then the wicked people of Canaan would have driven them out again, and the Children of Israel would never have found a home there. Already, a few days after they had crossed the Red Sea, when surely they had every reason to feel trust in Moses as their leader, they began to find fault.

It was a dreary land they had come into, which we call the Wilderness, and the first trouble they had was to find good drinking water. They wandered around from one place to another, day after day, until they came to a spring called Marah. Then for a moment they were pleased, until they had tasted the waters of the spring and found them bitter.

This made the people angry. Instead of being glad that they had been delivered from slavery, they began to murmur against Moses and to complain, saying to him: "What shall we drink?" You see they never seemed to think about doing anything for themselves, but always waited until Moses should come and help them.

But I am glad to say that Moses knew what to do. He discovered a certain kind of tree, the branches of which were thrown into the waters and made them all right and sweet to the taste; and so at last the people were satisfied and rested after their long journey. Then Moses called them together, assembling the vast throng of six hundred thousand before him, and he said to them: "If you will only hearken diligently and do what is right and keep the commandments which have been given to you by the Lord, then all will come right in the end." And as they had plenty of water to drink just then and were resting from their

long journey, they felt quite pleased and promised faithfully to do what was right and to obey.

Yet I am afraid that poor Moses did not feel quite sure of their promises. Some people when they have what they want will promise almost anything; but just as soon as they are hungry or disappointed again, they will break their promises and begin to complain.

By and by they set out once more on their long journey. And as they went on further, there was little or nothing for them to eat; and they became hungry. Instead of looking around everywhere and trying to think for themselves, they began to find fault again and to talk against Moses and Aaron, saying: "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt when we sat by the flesh pots and did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into the Wilderness to kill us all with hunger."

As you go on in life you will often hear about "sighing for the flesh pots of Egypt," and you will see from this what it means; how the Israelites, for instance, although they knew that by and by they were to reach the Promised Land, where everything would be happier and better for them, yet just on account of the trials in their way at the present moment, kept wishing that they had not started out, but rather that they had stayed back and made the best of all their troubles. The food they had received in Egypt was bad in the extreme, prepared in the "flesh pots," as it is said. But just at this moment it struck them that it was better to have that wretched food than nothing at all.

We keep wondering why they did not look about them, or try to get food for themselves, instead of always laying the blame on Moses and sighing for the flesh pots of Egypt. Yet perhaps we ought not to blame the people too much. They had had a very hard time of it in Egypt. They had been treated like children, not allowed to have their own way, but just made to work all the while like slaves. So it was necessary that they should grow up, to learn their mistake,

quite as children have to grow up and find out a great deal from their own experience.

A sensible grown person does not complain or cry like a child. Hence we take it for granted that the Israelites after a while would learn to stop their complaining and act like sensible men and women. But no; Moses had to find food for them, and, as good fortune would have it, there was food enough of a certain kind found in the Wilderness.

It seems that something was found on the leaves of plants in the morning, looking a good deal like dew; but when it became a little harder it was good to eat. And this small, flaky thing was called Manna. There was plenty of it in the Wilderness; and so as a rule the people had enough to eat if they would only be content with it. It had to be gathered in the early morning; and as it would only keep a little while, they had to be careful to provide themselves with enough to last them through each day.

The taste of this Manna was something like wafers made with honey, and I fancy it must have been very sweet. Sometimes this Manna has been called "bread from heaven," because of the peculiar way in which it appeared in the morning, as if it had fallen from the skies.

By this time we should think that the Israelites would surely have stopped their murmuring, inasmuch as Moses and Aaron had found food enough for them in plenty in this Manna; but as they went on traveling, sometimes there would be no water, and they would again cry out at once, blaming Moses and Aaron for not taking care of them.

The more I think of it, the more I feel that Moses must have been a brave, strong man, in order to keep up his courage in the face of all these complaints. When he had been first told by the Ruler of the World that he should be the leader of the Israelites, he had been timid, not feeling at all sure that he would be strong enough to do this work. But sometimes those people who are not perfectly sure of themselves go on becoming stronger and stronger. They do not

stand still, but go ahead and do the best they know how. And Moses had made up his mind now that he, too, was to go ahead and do the best he knew how, and try to see if he could not rescue his people from the Egyptians.

Just now, however, he was having a pretty hard time of it. He had managed to get them safely across the Red Sea; but troubles seemed to grow thick and fast upon them. He became tired of that incessant cry about the "flesh pots of Egypt," wondering why it was that the people did not act less like children and try to provide for themselves.

But as something had to be done now that all the people were thirsty again, he went ahead faithfully as their leader, and at last found a spring right at the edge of a large rock. Then he called the people to approach; and they began to draw near. He stood before the rock and drew the grasses away, and showed them the clear, cold water. And once more the people were ashamed of their complaining.

You see, Moses had to be a kind of king over them, and also had to be a leader and keep up their spirits, and had to think about their health and show them how to take care of themselves. Then, too, he had to watch how they were behaving and to see that they did not fall into bad habits. He knew that he was leading them forward little by little across that Wilderness to the Promised Land.

But they had worse troubles, sometimes, even than hunger and thirst. There were enemies living in that Wilderness—wicked people who hated the Israelites, and did not wish them to pass through that country. One tribe of these people, for instance, were called the Amalekites, and they were very angry against the Israelites for coming into that country; and their king came boldly forward and began to harass the travelers, not letting them go any further.

If the Children of Israel had been inclined to complain before, they were much more inclined that way now. But there they were. They could not turn back, and they knew they would have to do something. All

depended on having them keep up their courage. You may like to know what Moses did. He knew that the Israelites would be successful if they only went on fighting long enough. But as I have said, they were like children, and just as soon as they became discouraged they would stop fighting. And Moses climbed a hill not far away and stood on the top and held up his hand so that whenever they saw it they should feel encouraged and go on fighting. But this was no easy thing to do, to stand there hour after hour holding up his hand. Now and then it would drop through weariness. Then at once the Israelites would lose heart and fall back and the Amalekites would strike hard, and it would look for a time as if the Israelites would all be put to death. Once more Moses would raise that right hand, and stand there with it raised, and their courage would return and they would go on fighting again.

When Moses could stand no longer, they brought a stone from near by and put it under him; yet he held up his hand so the people might see it and continue fighting. At last he could hold out no longer. His strength was failing, and his hand dropped. When the Israelites saw this they fell back again, and Amalek prevailed. Just at this time a man named Hur, together with Aaron, went up the hill, and they stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side, and kept them there until the sun had set. And the people of Israel won their victory through their trust in Moses. They had watched his hand held up there on the hilltop all day long, and they felt sure that while he stayed there and held it up they were safe.

It seems that down in the valley where the battle waged, a brave captain had been selected by the name of Joshua; and so we are told, "Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people."

This was a good lesson for the Israelites. For the first time they had begun to have some courage and to be able to trust in themselves a little more, instead of always falling back on Moses. Then, too, they

had learned how to fight in war; and this was very important; because as they went on in their history they had much fighting to do before they were able to win for themselves the Promised Land.

You may like to know just how Moses and Aaron governed the people of Israel at that time. When the people left Egypt, they had gone out as a crowd of men and women together, each family by itself, under the two leaders, Moses and Aaron. Now, we can feel sure that there would be any amount of quarreling and strife going on among all those families, and Moses would have to try in all sorts of ways to keep them at peace with one another.

For this reason, from time to time, Moses set apart a day to act as a judge, and the people who had grievances would come to him and he would judge between them. But you must remember that there were six hundred thousand people, and this was a great many.

I am happy to say, however, that just about this time Moses met his father-in-law, Jethro. You will remember him as being the father of the woman whom Moses had married in the land of Midian. Jethro was a practical man; and when he saw how Moses sat to judge the people, and how the people stood about Moses from morning until evening, Jethro said: "What is this thing that thou doest? Why sitteth thou thyself alone and all the people stand about thee from morning until evening?" Of course Moses thought all this ought to be plain enough. But he had great respect for his wife's father, a much older man than himself, and he answered: "Because when the people have a matter they come unto me and I judge between them."

Then Jethro said: "The thing thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou and this people who are with thee; for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. Hearken now unto my voice and I will give thee counsel. Thou shalt teach the people ordinances and laws, and show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work they must do. Moreover, thou

shalt provide out of the people able men, men of truth, hating injustice, and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties and rulers of tens, and they shall act and judge for the people at all times; and it shall be whenever a very important matter comes, that they shall bring it unto thee; but the small matters shall be passed upon by these other judges; so it shall be easier for thyself, and these others shall bear the burdens with thee. If thou shalt do this thing, then thou shalt be able to hold out, and all this people shall go to their place in peace."

This was a very practical idea on the part of Jethro, and I am quite sure Moses was pleased the moment it was mentioned. He had never been a ruler himself, having been left for the most part alone with his family for a great many years. Hence he had to find out little by little how to become a leader. At once he chose out able men from among the people of Israel, and made them heads or judges over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties and rulers of tens.

In this way, for the first time, the Children of Israel began to have a government of their own. People cannot live together for a great while and prosper unless they have some sort of government; and this was a very wise piece of advice which was given by Jethro. Moses must have been pleased, and I am sure everything went much better after that with the Children of Israel.

TO THE TEACHER: This is a longer chapter, and could be divided into two parts. Several of the incidents are classic and need to be fixed firmly in the minds of the children. Write on the blackboard the words or phrases, "Manna," "Waters of Marah," "Flesh pots of Egypt," "Holding up the hands of Moses." Have the children explain what these mean, repeating them as they read over the story. Make a good deal of the phrase, "Flesh pots of Egypt," and

show how it has become typical of fault-finding and dissatisfaction. Dwell further on the trials of Moses and what he had to endure. Point out how much patience grown people have to show to children and how hard this must be sometimes. Keep harping on the "childishness" of the fault-finding habit. Do not overlook the last incident in the establishment of a government at the suggestion of Jethro, and the importance of government. Children may grasp this point in a general way.

MEMORY VERSE.—*Would that we had died in the land of Egypt when we sat by the flesh pots and did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth in the Wilderness to kill us all with hunger.*

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Giving of the Ten Commandments.

The Children of Israel had been wandering now for quite a long time in the Wilderness. It would seem as if they had begun by this time to learn a little patience. Then, too, as you remember, they now had some sort of government, with rulers or judges over them. But the most important event in their history had not yet come, and you will want to know about it.

From time to time I have told you how the Ruler of the World had said things to one or another of the people, men like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, or Moses, telling them what to do. But he had never given them a set of rules which they were to obey. He had said "do this" or "do that," or "do something else"; but the time had come when the people needed to have a set of rules telling them how they should behave, and what they ought to do or ought not to do.

In the Wilderness there is one mountain about which a great deal has been told. It rises thousands of feet into the air; and the rock has a reddish tinge, so that people can see it a long distance away. I am not sure that there is another mountain in the world like this Mount Sinai. There had always been something strange and mysterious about it to the people who had lived in the Wilderness before the Israelites had come there. And so when the Israelites saw this huge mass of rock looming up before them in all its majesty, something took place which they remembered all the rest of their lives.

They did not go quite close to the mountain, as they felt a little afraid of it. Somehow it struck them that this mountain must belong peculiarly to the Lord, as

if in a certain way the mighty Ruler of the World, dwelt there upon its top. The country round about was called the Wilderness of Sinai; and the people of Israel camped there before the mountain.

Then the Lord told Moses that the people were to prepare themselves and to wait, and that on the third day he would come to them in a cloud on Mount Sinai, saying: "Thou shalt set bounds to the people round about, telling them to take heed to themselves that they go not up into the mountain or touch the border of it; whosoever toucheth the mount shall be put to death, whether it be beast or man; but when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall all approach the mount." And Moses told the people to be ready against the third day. And it came to pass on the third day when it was morning that there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people in the camp trembled. And Mount Sinai was altogether in a smoke, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

And the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up; and while he was alone there with the Lord he was given two tables of stone, on which were written the Ten Commandments. No one of course could see Moses. The whole mountain was covered with a great, thick, black cloud. All the people knew was, that Moses had entered into that cloud.

You may like to know what those Ten Commandments were. The first one was that the people should worship the Lord; the second, that they should never make any image of the Lord, the Ruler of the World, or worship images and become idolaters like the other wicked people around them; the third was that they should not be profane, or take the Lord's name in vain. This, you see, was a commandment against swearing. The fourth was that they should keep holy the Sabbath Day; the fifth, that the people should honor their fathers and mothers; the sixth, that they should do no murder—although it may puzzle us a little why people should ever need to have a Command-

ment like that; the seventh was against committing adultery, meaning by this that husbands and wives should be true to each other; the eighth was, "Thou shalt not steal." I am sure everybody understood that, and I very much fear that in those days they needed that Commandment. The ninth was the Commandment against lying, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor;" and the tenth and the last was against covetousness: "Thou shalt not covet * * *" meaning that people should not want things that belong to others, because by and by, if one goes on thinking about how much one wants such things, one may be ready to go and take them; so that in this way, coveting leads to stealing.

These were the Ten Commandments, the rules, as I have told you, that the Israelites were to obey. A part of these rules dealt with the way they should act toward each other, and a part of them dealt with the way they should act toward the Lord over All.

In the meantime, there was Moses up there on the mountain with those two tables of stone on which were written the Ten Commandments. The people had not seen them, and as yet knew nothing about them. But, Moses was up there quite a long while, and the people did not know what to make of it. Day after day passed, and there was that awful cloud overhanging the mountain, and they saw nothing of Moses.

By and by they began to think that Moses would never come back, that perhaps the Lord, the Ruler of the World, had been cheating them and did not care about them at all. And then they did something very bad indeed. They were like frightened children left alone; they did not know how to act for themselves, and they had not learned patience.

One cannot help thinking all the while how unfit they would have been to have taken possession of the Promised Land. But be that as it may, when, after waiting for some time Moses did not return to them, they made up their minds that perhaps the true way was to worship some other being in place of the Lord over All, and they fell into what is called idolatry, or

worship of images instead of the Lord. This was something that the Lord had feared might happen, knowing how ignorant people are inclined to do this; and so he had a commandment against it engraved on the two tables of stone.

As Moses did not come down, they went to Aaron and told him what they wanted; and I am very sorry to say that Aaron lost his good sense and judgment altogether. This is what they said to Aaron: "Up; make us gods which shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man that brought us out of the land of Egypt, we know not what has become of him."

Aaron ought to have rebuked them, telling them how bad they were for thinking about such a thing, and refusing even to listen to them. But no; he was afraid lest they might do something to him unless he granted their wishes, although he really knew better. And this is what he said to them: "Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons and of your daughters, and bring them unto me." And all the people broke off their golden earrings which were in their ears and brought them unto Aaron. And what do you suppose he did? Why, he took all that gold, and with tools made an image of a calf and set that calf of gold before them and said: "This is what brought thee out of Egypt." Then Aaron built an altar before it, and the people actually made sacrifices on the altar to this golden calf. And after making their offerings they had a great feast. and they sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

Moses of course knew nothing about these happenings. He had been waiting quietly with the Lord up on Mount Sinai, receiving the Ten Commandments on the two tables of stone. Now the Lord told Moses to go down at once bearing the two tables of stone in his hand. Then, just as Moses came to the edge of the cloud at the foot of the mountain, he heard a great noise and shouting. And he said to himself: "This is not the voice of them that shout for mastery; neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome,

but the voice of them that sing, do I hear." Then, as he came near the camp and saw the golden calf, he knew at once that the people had forgotten him entirely and thought no more about him, having given him up as a leader. And he was furiously angry. All of a sudden he lifted up the two tables of stone which were in his hands and broke them in pieces beneath the mountain.

We cannot altogether blame Moses for being angered at what he saw; although the impulsive act on his part was wrong. He had received those tables from the Lord, and it was his duty to have given them to the people. I do not think he was ever forgiven for what he did in his anger. But he knew the people must be punished, and so he took the golden calf which they had made and ground it up into a powder and strewed it upon the waters and made the people drink of it. And Moses said unto Aaron: "What did these people do to thee that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?" Then Aaron of course felt ashamed. He knew he deserved punishment and his conscience troubled him very much.

But he tried to excuse himself, and said to Moses: "Let not thy anger wax hot; thou knowest the people and how they are set on mischief, and they said, Make us a god which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him. And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it to me and I cast it into the fire and there came out this golden calf."

Moses decided that they should be punished in a way they would never forget. He was the ruler, and what he said was law. He commanded that three thousand of the people should be put to death because of this wickedness. He told the people, "Ye have sinned a great sin. Now I will go up unto the Lord and make a confession unto him of what you have done." Then the Lord told Moses to hew two pieces of stone like unto the two first, and to come to him at the top of the mountain. This is what was said to Moses: "Be

ready in the morning and go up to Mount Sinai and present thyself there at the top of the mountain, and neither let any man be seen throughout all the mountain."

Then Moses hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and rose up early in the morning and went up on Mount Sinai and took in his hand the two tables of stone. And Moses up there on top of the mountain wrote down again on those two tables the words of the Ten Commandments. And it came to pass, as we are told, when Moses came from the mountain with the two tables of the Ten Commandments in his hand, as he came down from the mountain he knew not that the skin of his face shone. As he drew near to the camp, Aaron and all the Children of Israel saw Moses, noticing how the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to go near him. And Moses called to himself Aaron and all the rulers, and he spoke to them and gave them the two tables of stone on which were written the Ten Commandments. These were to be taught therefore as rules of life to the Children of Israel. And the Lord told them that if they would keep these Commandments he would make sure that they should come to the Promised Land.

TO THE TEACHER: In taking up this lesson of the Ten Commandments it will be best to connect one special point in some way with each Commandment, so that the children shall remember all their lives what each numbered part of the Decalogue is about. For instance, they can fix in mind how the Fourth Commandment has to do with honoring one's father and mother, or how the second one is against image worship or idolatry, and so with the others. There might be some further talk about the last four of the Commandments. If the teacher or head of the school using these lessons prefers, he may, of course, introduce the Decalogue exactly as it stands in the Bible in the place of the wording in this chapter. The lesson is of course a most important one and should be re-

viewed again and again. Show a picture of Mount Sinai, perhaps also of Egyptian idols, so as to illustrate what idolatry means. But it would be well not to go too far in the subject of idolatry, as it might soon lead into metaphysics and do more harm than good to the minds of young children.

MEMORY VERSE: *What did these people do to thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?*

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Ark and the Tabernacle.

All this time, while they had been wandering around there in the Wilderness until they came to Mount Sinai, they had nothing with them which in some way should make them think always of the Lord Over All. They were positively sure that it was he who had brought them out of Egypt and led them into the Wilderness. Now at last, after they had received those two tables of stone containing the Ten Commandments, they felt that they must do something to show their willingness to obey. Moses thought that they should have something for the purpose, which the people might carry around with them, always reminding them of the Great Ruler. And I will tell you what was done.

Moses decided to make an "ark;" not the kind that Noah made, but a sort of small box or trunk, as you might think of it, made in a beautiful way from the rarest kind of wood. It was overlaid with pure gold, within and without, and it had two gold rings on each side. It was made of acacia wood, and must have been something very striking to look at. We hear so much about this ark in the history of the Children of Israel that you may like to know just the words we are told that the Ruler of the World used, when he instructed Moses how to make it.

This is what he said: "And thou shalt make an ark of acacia wood; two cubits and a half shall be the length of it and a cubit and a half shall be the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold

round about. And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it and shalt put them in the four feet thereof, and two rings shall be on the one side and two rings shall be on the other side. And thou shalt make staves of acacia wood and overlay them with gold, and thou shalt put the staves into the rings that the ark may be borne by them, and the staves shall not be taken from it."

Then, when the ark had been made according to instructions, what do you suppose Moses did with it? Why, he put into it those two tables of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written. We should be sure for this reason that the Israelites would care a great deal about this ark, now that it held those two precious tables of stone. Then besides this ark, Moses felt that there ought to be a sort of Sanctuary or a kind of temple made, where the ark should remain, and which should be looked upon as belonging to the Lord. This is the same idea I told you about when Adam and Eve built an altar after they had been cast out of Eden. And along with this sanctuary or temple, there was to be an altar on which offerings might be made by the people.

Now Moses felt that his tabernacle or sanctuary of worship should be made of everything most precious, and so he called upon the people, asking them to make an offering. The Ruler of the World had told them to do this, saying: They shall make for me an offering, every man whose heart maketh him willing, and this offering which thou shalt take from them shall be of gold and silver and brass, and blue and purple and scarlet, and fine linen, and goat's hair and rams' skins dyed red, and acacia wood; and oil for the light and spices for the oil; and onyx stones and stones to be set. And out of all these things, let them make me a sanctuary."

And so they set to work to make this sanctuary. But you see it could not be like a church or a temple such as we should think of nowadays, because it could not be kept in one place. The Israelites were wandering round about there in the Wilderness, and they

would have to carry this ark or sanctuary with them. Hence they kept it in a tent, inasmuch as they had to live in tents in those days. These tents would be carried with them, and the one containing the ark would be the church or temple.

When all this was done, of course the people were pleased. They felt that now they had something with them which should always remind them of their Great Ruler, and how good he had been to them in bringing them up out of the land of Egypt and setting them free from their slavery. We are told besides, that a beautiful cloud used to rest right over the tent where the ark and the tabernacle were placed. When the people were not journeying, but staying in one place, then the cloud would rest quietly over the tent; and when the time came for the people to go in their travels, the cloud would rise, we are told, and go before them, and they would follow it from place to place. It is also stated that in the night time this cloud assumed the appearance of a beautiful light or fire; hence sometimes we talk nowadays about the "pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night," which was supposed to go before the Children of Israel and show them the way.

All this happened a long, long while ago, just how long I cannot say. But we know that the Children of Israel had to wander a great while in the Wilderness, waiting impatiently for the day when they might cross the River Jordan and enter the Promised Land.

TO THE TEACHER: The important significance of this lesson is to fix in the memory of the children the words "Ark" and "Pillar of Cloud," because these terms have been important in all the literature of Christendom. The children must remember what such terms stand for and how they arose. Something could be said of the right spirit with which the people brought of their "best," with which to make the "Ark" and to decorate it. If deemed advisable, this and the following chapter could be treated as one lesson.

CHAPTER XXV.

The Sin of Moses.

We must speak now of something which was very sad in the life of Moses. He had gone on for a long while, as you remember, doing the best he knew how, leading the people out of Egypt, and guiding them from place to place through the Wilderness.

But while Moses had been a good man, nevertheless there had been a certain weakness about him, so that we can never think of him as having been quite perfect.

You remember that when he met the Lord in the fields while he was tending the flocks of his father-in-law in Midian, and had been told to go to the king of Egypt, asking to have the Children of Israel set free, how Moses was timid and did not quite want to do at once as he was commanded to do. By and by, of course, his courage came, and he went along with Aaron. But at that time I think that we could not help feeling that there was something not quite right with Moses, making us fear lest by and by he might commit mistakes and do something he would have to regret later on. And this did happen now in the Wilderness. Moses forgot himself and did wrong, so that he had to be punished for it, and the punishment was very severe indeed. For my own part, I am certain that if he had done right and shown the right spirit when he had been told to go to the King of Egypt and ask for the freedom of the Israelites, that this later mistake on the part of Moses would never have happened. People who are too timid at one time may by and by act just the other way and be too bold at another time.

You know that when Moses had been called the first time, he had been timid. He had not shown himself at

once brave and fearless. Now he acted too boldly and was to be severely punished for it.

It seems that once more the Children of Israel became very selfish and impatient. They had plenty of food to eat in the manna I have told you about; but sometimes in their wanderings they did not have enough water, and at one time they had been traveling quite a long while and had grown very thirsty.

Then what do you suppose the people did? "Began to talk about the fleshpots of Egypt," you say? Yes, exactly. You know now how the Israelites would act like children when they grew impatient. Well, they began to talk again in the same old way. This is what they said to Moses: "Would to the Lord that we had died when our brethren died in Egypt. Why hast thou brought us into the Wilderness that we should die here with thirst? Wherefore hast thou brought us into this evil place? It is no place of figs and vines and pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink."

You notice what a way people have of exaggerating their troubles. They really had enough to eat in the manna they had found in that country. What they were crying for now was good drinking water. And just because they could not get it they blamed Moses for it, and also because he did not give them nice dishes of the best kind of food or the richest fruits.

Poor Moses! Surely we could feel sorry for him. The people were never satisfied. He, too, must have been thirsty like the rest of them. But he had sense enough not to complain and sigh for grapes and pomegranates and all sorts of nice things to eat, when he could get manna there. But for once he lost all patience. He felt that he was much superior to the rest of them, and had behaved himself much better than they had, having acted in a brave, bold spirit, while they had behaved in a very cowardly way.

He went ahead some distance, looking about, and at last found a fine large spring of water at the edge of a great rock. Then he made up his mind that he would give the people a scolding, now that he had found the water for them. And so he called them to him, as many

as could hear his voice; and thousands gathered about the rock. They did not know the spring of water was there. And there stood Moses, his rod in his hand. Then he cried out, speaking as if he were the Lord himself: "Hear, now, ye rebels! Shall we bring you forth water out of this rock?"

Oh, if Moses had never spoken in that way. It cost him dear, because it was for those words that he was to be punished. You see, in the way he spoke in using the word "we," he talked just as if it were the Lord himself speaking. He had placed himself as being as good or as great as the Lord Over All. Although he had done as nearly right as he knew how, yet he was not what we should have called *perfect*. And this was a display of pride. Moses had been brave and true in many ways, and had certainly put up with a great deal. But he had not been so true and so brave and so courageous as to make it right for him to think of himself as being quite perfect. At any rate, when he had said those words he smote the rock with his rod, the grasses were thrust aside and there was plenty of water.

But even as Moses did this, I think there must have been a new look on his face, a troubled look, as if his conscience began to worry him. He had no sooner uttered those words than he felt he had done wrong. He walked away from the spring, leaving the people there quenching their thirst. But as for himself he had no desire to drink. He was too unhappy. He knew he deserved punishing, and he felt that punishment would soon come.

And it did come—an awful punishment, such as he had never dreamed of. The Great Ruler told him plainly of the wrong he had been guilty of, although Moses knew in his own heart what he had done. Because of this wrong act of pride and boastfulness he was never to be allowed to enter the Promised Land.

Just think what that meant to Moses. He had thought of it by day and dreamed of it by night.

Never to enter the Promised Land! How his heart sank within him. Even as a boy I fancy his mother had told him of the promise made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, before the time when he went to live as the son of the Princess in the palace of the king of Egypt. And he had thought how after all his wanderings in that Wilderness, by and by there would come an end to his troubles and he would be able to lead the people across the River Jordan into the Land of Canaan. And now because of this pride and boastfulness he was to be punished in this awful way. He was to go on for years leading the people about until they should come in sight of the Jordan; and after all his labors, he was to die there alone in the Wilderness, and not share in the happiness that was in store for the rest.

It makes us full of sorrow for poor Moses, although we feel that he deserved to be punished; because when people set themselves up as being perfect, it is nothing but pride; and pride generally has a fall. As soon as they do this, they never seem to grow any better, but stay right where they are, instead of going on improving themselves.

The punishment had come, and Moses had to make the best of it. And I am glad to say that afterwards he usually acted in a brave, true spirit. He was never too bold again, neither was he timid. He went on like a true leader guiding the children of Israel from place to place in the Wilderness, trying to make them better people, and preparing them for the time when they should enter the Promised Land.

TO THE TEACHER: A great deal might be made out of this lesson by proper treatment. It could be emphasized how even the best and strongest people need to be on their guard lest they suddenly fall into temptation. Tell the children how easy it is for a person who is a little superior in one respect to those around him, to begin to feel himself superior in all respects, or to think himself perfect. Point out the

utter folly of such pride and how it makes a person weak instead of strong. Explain that the collapse or fall under such circumstances is liable to come suddenly or unexpectedly; and then follow the shame and humiliation. Arouse a sense of pity for Moses and dwell on the sad features of his awful disappointment.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Nearing the Promised Land.

You may grow a little tired of hearing about the murmurings of the Israelites; but you see you are finding out how the people learned to do better, and how they began in the complaining way I have told you about, before they finally came to have confidence in themselves. And so I must tell you of some other experiences which the children of Israel had, because of their complaining or fault-finding there in the Wilderness.

It was owing to the same old trouble about what they had to eat and drink. They never would be content. Every now and then they would mourn the loss of the "flesh pots of Egypt," and begin to murmur and wish they had some nicer kind of food. There was the manna in plenty, as I have said, and it was wholesome; but they wished for something better. If they had plenty of water to drink, then they would grow angry because they did not have some nicer kind of food. Or if they had plenty of food, they would complain because they did not have enough water. At one time they made so much trouble about the food that they were sadly punished for it all.

The talk was of the old kind, as you know. This is what they said to Moses: "Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish of which we did eat in Egypt, the cucumbers and the leeks and the melons and the onions; but now our soul is dried away and there is nothing at all besides this manna, before our eyes."

You notice how the habit of exaggeration grows on people who are impatient and inconsiderate. You

see how they cried out "there is nothing at all," in that selfish way.

Then Moses talked to the Lord about it, and the Lord became indignant over the way the people were behaving, and he said to Moses: "Thou shalt see now whether my word come to pass unto thee or not." And there went forth a wind; it kept blowing for a while, blowing more and more, and it kept on blowing; by and by it brought great flocks of quails by the hundreds and thousands. The quails kept on coming, flying with the wind, until by and by thousands of them fell around the camp where the Israelites were.

Then the people were pleased. They thought now they could have something different to eat than manna; and they became very greedy. They went out and gathered these quails and brought them into the camp for food. They took large baskets and filled them, until they had all the quails they wanted. They had not had this kind of food for a long while, and they went on eating and eating to their hearts' content.

You can be sure that many would eat too much of that kind of food, because they would not use self-control or self-restraint. They just went on eating all they wanted, not taking the manna at all. And so they were punished. They were all made sick by their greediness, and then, oh, how they wished they had never touched those quails! Nearly every man and woman there in the camp was ill because they had eaten so much of that one kind of food. Just think how ashamed they must have been, sick in mind as well as body. They knew now what it meant to be greedy, and to the end of their lives would remember what happened to them from eating quails. It was a lesson for their murmuring and complaining, and for thinking how much better off in former times they were than now.

After this I do not know just how long the Israelites went on wandering in the Wilderness, hoping for the time to come when they should enter the Land of Canaan; but at one time it seems they came quite near to the country not far away from the River Jor-

dan, which separated the Wilderness from the Land of Canaan.

It was decided then to send a number of men over into Canaan to find out what sort of a country it was, so that they should know how to act, and what they should have to do when they crossed the Jordan and entered there. It was known that the people who at that time lived in the land of Canaan were very wicked. So these men had to go as spies, not letting the people know who they were, lest they should be put to death. This is what Moses said to them: "Get you up this way southward and see the land, what it is; and the people that dwell there, whether they be strong or weak, whether they be few or many; and what the land is that they dwell in, and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents or in strongholds; and what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein or not. And be ye of good courage and bring of the fruit of the land."

I must own that I should not like to have been one of those spies who were obliged to cross the Jordan and go into a strange country among the wicked people there. But they went, nevertheless, the spies doing what they were told.

They saw a good deal of the country and what kind of people were there, and they found it to be just as the Lord had told them—a very rich country, one flowing with milk and honey, as had been promised. And they thought how they would like to bring back some of the fruits or grapes they found growing there. And so they concluded to take one of the clusters back with them. Now it would be an easy enough matter for us now to carry a single bunch of grapes with us anywhere, if we did it carefully. But the bunches of grapes they found there in the Land of Canaan were larger than any you or I have ever seen. In fact, a single bunch of grapes was so big that one man could not carry it. Hence two of the men took a staff and rested it upon their shoulders, and then they got down one huge cluster and hung it on the staff, and

in this way they carried it back to the Israelites in the Wilderness.

You can fancy the surprise of the people when they saw that immense bunch of grapes, so large that it took two people to carry it. And they all wanted to rush across the Jordan at once to live in that country where grapes grew so luxuriantly.

Then the men began to tell something about what they had seen there. This is what they said: "We came to the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey, and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless, the people be strong that dwell in the land; the cities are walled and very great."

And when the Israelites asked the spies how great the men were, they had to be told that the men of Canaan were giants—great, tall men—much taller than any of the Children of Israel, saying, "We were in our sight as grasshoppers as compared with these Canaanites."

Another look came over the people's faces. They said no more about rushing over into that land where that bunch of grapes was found. It was all different now, and they talked in another way; and once more they felt just like children, in spite of all the training they had had there in the Wilderness. And what do you suppose they talked about? Why, the old cry, of course—sighing for the fleshpots of Egypt. This is what they said to Moses: "Would to the Lord we had died in the land of Egypt; wherefore doth the Lord bring us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return to Egypt? Let us choose a captain, and let him lead us back to that country."

Then two of those brave men who had gone there into Canaan, Joshua and Caleb, felt very sorry indeed and very much ashamed of the folly of the Israelites in wishing to return to Egypt. They rent their clothes, and said to the people: "The land which we passed through to see, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, he will bring us to this land and give it unto us; for it is a land that floweth with milk and

honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land."

The Children of Israel became angry at this and picked up stones and were going to stone Joshua and Caleb for talking in that way. Then the Great Ruler knew that these people would never be ready or fit to enter the Promised Land. In spite of all the troubles they had had, and the punishments, they went on acting in the same old way. At first he decided to put them all to death. But Moses pleaded very hard that the people might be forgiven, and this is what he said: "Thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among the Egyptians, for they have heard that thou art with us, that thy cloud standeth over the people and that thou goest before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Now if thou shalt kill these people as one man, then the nations when they hear of it will say that thou didst it because thou wert not able to bring the people into the Land which thou promised them. Now I pray thee, pardon the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven these people even from Egypt until now." And the Lord said to Moses: "I will pardon this people according to thy wish; but surely they shall not see the land which I promised to their fathers,—none of them that now live, save Joshua and Caleb. As for the rest of them, they shall die in the Wilderness according to their whole number, all those who were twenty years old and upward when they left the land of Egypt."

Moses told all this to the Children of Israel and they knew that they had been punished. You see, the Ruler of the World had found out at last that all those who had been grown men and women when they left Egypt, would always act like children, and that the only thing to do would be to wait until they should die, and until those who had been children when they left Egypt had grown up into manhood and womanhood and might show a better spirit.

And this is why the Israelites had to wander about there in the Wilderness for forty years, as we are

told, before being allowed to enter the Promised Land. If they had acted less like children, all this would not have happened and they might have gone into that country long before. All they could think about to comfort themselves was that, at any rate, their children would be able to go there and live in that beautiful country. Whenever new trials came to them, instead of thinking how, by and by, they would enter that land, they would say to each other: "Well, at any rate our children can go there when they are grown men and women."

When it was too late, they had begun to learn better behavior. But they looked into their children's faces and kept up their courage for the sake of their little ones. Still they were obliged to stay in that tiresome country for many years yet, living on the manna, and wandering about from place to place. Sometimes the wicked people who dwelt in the Wilderness would attack them and try to kill them; and so they had war from time to time. But they felt pretty sure now that the Lord, the Ruler of the World, would stand by them and keep his promise, and that their children should by and by cross the Jordan and enter that Land.

I do not need to tell you about the battles they had, because war is always a sad subject. It means almost everything terrible that one can think of. Yet, from these wars, the Israelites learned a great deal about fighting, and began to have more courage; so that their Lord could feel sure that, by and by, they would be fit for their new home in the new country.

TO THE TEACHER: The first part of this chapter is something of a refrain and as such has a value. The point can not be driven home too strongly. Touch on the disposition to exaggeration, especially when one is telling of one's woes or troubles. Explain how tiresome this becomes to those who have to listen to it. In the second part of the chapter we deal once more with the feature of "childishness," in the habit of talking boldly one minute and being cowardly the next.

Point out the mistake in not showing trust and going ahead at once when a command comes from a superior. Dwell on the courage and promptitude with which Caleb and Joshua had gone forth at once at the charge of Moses, without fear or hesitation. Show a picture of the two men carrying the bunch of grapes. Emphasize the fearful disappointment which must have fallen on the people in the punishment meted out to them, and yet explain how thoroughly they deserved it.

MEMORY VERSES:

The land which we passed through is an exceeding good land; for it is a land that is flowing with milk and honey.

Neither rebel ye against the Lord nor be afraid of the people of the land

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Story of Balaam.

In the course of the many experiences which this people had to go through, during those years of waiting, there is one event, however, which you might care to hear about, because of what happened in connection with it. You may, perhaps, already have heard of Balaam. It is a story which is often told about the Children of Israel in those early days when they were wandering in the wilderness.

It seems that at one time they had met with a tribe of people called the Moabites, who were quite hostile but at the same time very much afraid. And the name of the king of this people was Balak. As we are told in our story:

“Moab was sore afraid of the people because they were many; and Moab was distressed because of the Children of Israel, saying: Now shall this multitude lick up all that is round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field.”

They were very much concerned, therefore, as to what they should do in order to protect themselves and to overcome the Israelites. And at last they fell upon a scheme which will seem very strange to us. In those early days, as you know, there was a belief among many people that a certain class of persons might do an injury by pronouncing curses. It was felt that if such men should speak a curse upon anybody, then the language somehow carried with it much possible harm to that person. Balak, the king of the Moabites, made up his mind accordingly, that he would have this done if possible upon the children of Israel. And the man he selected for the purpose was Balaam.

He sent messengers to this person, therefore, saying: "Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt; they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me. Come now, therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me. Peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them and that I may drive them out of the land; for I know that he whom thou blesseth is blessed, and he whom thou curseth is cursed."

But the Ruler over All warned Balaam that he should not go with them, saying: "Thou shalt not curse the people; for they are blessed." The servants of the king were, therefore, obliged to return disappointed. But again Balak sent other messengers, princes even more noble than the first, and they came to Balaam and said to him: "Thus saith Balak: "Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me. For I will promote thee unto very great honor, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me. Come now, therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people." And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak: "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord to do less or more."

Yet one cannot help thinking that he was a little disappointed the first time. While he felt that he could not disobey, yet somehow we are inclined to assume that he wanted to carry out the wishes of Balak. He was one of those men who like to have their own way in spite of the commands which might be laid upon them. He would not actually disobey, but his obedience was what we should call of a half-hearted kind. There are a good many people who have this trait of character and it shows itself in many ways.

Under the circumstances, it seemed best to the Lord that Balaam should be allowed to go to the king of the Moabites and be put to a test. The man in this way might learn something which would be valuable for him throughout his whole life. It was said to him, therefore: "If the men come to call thee, rise up and

go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do."

And Balaam rose up in the morning and saddled his ass and went with the princes of Moab. On the way, however, he had a very striking experience. He was to be disciplined a little by the Ruler of the World, and to find out that a true obedience should be whole-hearted. He was riding along absent-mindedly, buried in his thoughts, scarcely conscious of where he was, perhaps thinking what words he should use in order to carry out the wish of the king of the Moabites, when suddenly the ass he rode came to a stop. A messenger of the Lord had been sent to give Balaam a warning, and stood there in the way. But for some strange reason, he was not seen by Balaam, who had been buried in his own thoughts and perhaps a little troubled in conscience. As we are told in our story:

Now he was riding upon his ass and his two servants were with him. And the ass saw the messenger standing in the way, with the sword drawn in his hand; and the ass turned aside out of the way and went into a field; and Balaam smote the ass to turn her into the way. Then the messenger stood in a hollow way between the vineyards, a fence being on this side and a fence on that side. And the ass saw the messenger and she thrust herself into the wall and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall. And he smote her again. And the messenger went further and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn either to the right hand nor to the left. And the ass saw the angel of the Lord and she lay down under Balaam. And Balaam's anger was kindled and he smote the ass with his staff.

Then what do you suppose happened? It was something most unusual and contrary to all our experiences. In the agitation of mind that Balaam was under, he seemed to hear a voice, as if it were the ass herself speaking to him, saying: "What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?" And Balaam said unto the ass: "Because thou hast mocked me. I would there were a sword in my hand, for now

I had killed thee." As he was speaking, he came to himself and was conscious where he was, and now for the first time saw the messenger of the Lord standing before him. And he bowed his head and fell on his face. And the messenger of the Lord said unto him: "Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times?" And Balaam said: "I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me; now, therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again."

It shows us what excitement was going on in the mind of Balaam. He had not been at peace within himself; for he had been pulled all the while in two ways. Down in his heart he saw plainly that he had really wanted to carry out the wishes of king Balak, while he knew it had been contrary to the wish of his Lord. He felt somehow as if he deserved a punishment. And now the warning came again from this messenger, saying in stern language, as if it was spoken right out of the conscience of Balaam himself: "Go with the men; but yet the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak."

And when he had come to Balak, he was taken up on one of the high places where the Moabites used to make sacrifices to their idols, and he was asked to curse the Children of Israel. As he stood there by the altar, he began to speak, saying: "Balak, king of Moab, hath brought me here, telling me, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse whom the Lord hath not cursed? For from the tops of the rocks I see him and from the hills I behold him. Who can count the dust of Jacob and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his."

And Balak said unto Balaam: "What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse my enemies and behold thou hast blessed them altogether." And he said again: "Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place from whence thou mayest see them; and curse me them from thence." And he took Balaam to another high place where there were other altars. And once more

the solemn words came forth: "Rise up, Balak, and hear. The Lord is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? He hath blessed and I cannot reverse it."

And Balak said unto Balaam: "Come, I pray thee, I will bring thee unto another place. And peradventure it will please the Lord that thou mayest curse me them from thence." All this will appear very strange to us nowadays. We can scarcely understand it at all. It takes us back, you see, to a far away world in times long, long ago. But we see that Balaam was now obedient in spite of himself. He had received his lesson there on the way, as he rode from his home to the abode of the king. It was plain enough to him now that there was to be no half-hearted obedience. He had to say exactly what he was told to say.

The third time, therefore, from the third high place, he stood by an altar. And Balaam lifted up his eyes and he saw Israel, dwelling according to their tribes. And he took up his parable and said: "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river side, and as cedar trees beside the waters. Blessed is he that blesseth thee and cursed is he that curseth thee."

And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam and he smote his hands together. And Balak said unto Balaam: "I called thee to curse my enemies and behold thou hast altogether blessed them these three times. Therefore, now, flee thou to thy place."

It was a sad experience for Balak and perhaps also a painful one for Balaam. Perhaps they had been friends in former times. But this stupid king had no right to ask of his friend to pronounce such a curse. It was weak on his part. Yes, worse, it was wicked. Perhaps, too, it was a discovery to Balaam. He may have found out that there was no power in himself to bless or to curse; that words just from his lips, out of himself, were mere words and had no meaning, save as

they spoke for the Ruler of the World. It was a lesson in humility to Balaam and a punishment upon Balak for his idolatry.

TO THE TEACHER: It may seem at first as if there were no actual lesson of value to be found in the story of Balaam. But under any circumstances, it must be told to the young people, because it is one of the best known tales from the Bible. On careful examination, however, we may see some valuable points to be found in the narrative. There is a suggestion of weakness of character in Balaam himself, and this can readily be pointed out. On the other hand, there is also the lesson suggested in the superstition of Balak. We must note that he was a worshiper of Baal and therefore an idolator. This belief in the influence of a curse went, therefore, with his idolatry. We do not wish to go far into the general subject of superstitions, but we can point out the weakness in supposing that any one man by his own authority may exert a sinister influence through the mere force of spoken words. There is a great deal more in this than merely the extraordinary incident which usually stands out so conspicuously, that of the ass speaking to Balaam,—although it is the feature which has often been emphasized as the one incident to be remembered.

MEMORY VERSES: *If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord, to do less or more.*

"The Lord is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent. Hath he said and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken and shall he not make it good?"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Death of Moses.

It was almost forty years now since the Children of Israel had crossed the Red Sea and come into the Wilderness. The time was drawing near when they were to be allowed to go over the River Jordan and enter the Land of Canaan. But this could not take place while Moses was alive. Aaron, however, who had been guilty of the same wrong conduct as Moses, had died some time before.

Moses was now an old man of some one hundred and twenty years. He felt that he could not live much longer. The story of his death is something we shall always be interested to remember. He was never to be allowed to enter the Promised Land; yet he had been so strong and so brave and so true all these years, save for the one time when he forgot himself, that the Lord over All thought at any rate he would let Moses take one look into that beautiful country.

At first Moses gathered as many people together as could hear him, and talked to them for a long while. He began to tell them all that had taken place since the time when he had led them out of Egypt from the Red Sea. I can fancy how the tears must have come into his eyes again and again as he went on speaking, and the memories of those struggles came back to him one after another.

He reminded them how the Red Sea had been driven back so that they could cross safely; then again, how when they were hungry and starving, they had found the manna growing as food everywhere in the Wilderness; how when they were thirsty, they would

come from time to time upon water. He reminded them above all, how selfish they had been in their complaining in former times; how they had always kept talking about the flesh pots of Egypt and wishing to return there in spite of the slavery. He reminded them of the time when they had had their first battle, and how he had stood on that hill and held up his hand that they might take courage and go on and fight bravely and win; and how he had remained on that hill from dawn till the setting of the sun, when they won their victory. He told them again of the time when they grew impatient of the food they had, and wanted the same they had had in Egypt, and how when the quails had been sent they had given themselves over to greed, and how they had been made sick because of their want of self-restraint. He reminded them how like children they had acted, and how long it had been before they were ready to enter the Promised Land. He told them once more of the time when they had sent spies into Canaan, thinking that they would soon enter that land; and how, when the spies came back with that cluster of grapes and told them about the giants over there, how they lost courage again and wanted to return to Egypt and their flesh pots, and how, for this reason their fathers and mothers had been punished by the decree that none of those who had been over twenty years old when they left Egypt should ever enter the Land. Then he told them about his own wrong conduct; and as he came to this point, his voice was shaking and tears came to his eyes, so that only those who were near to him could hear what he was saying. He was reminding them of the time when he was proud and boastful, and why he could never enter that Promised Land. Then he went on to speak of the Ten Commandments written on Mount Sinai on the two tables of stone, and how they had been given to the people to be preserved in the ark. Then he told them how they were to act, and what they were to do, and how they should be a true, brave people and

obey the laws, if they ever expected to be prosperous and happy.

But there was one thing more to be considered. He knew it would not do to leave them without a leader—some one who might take his place. Long before, the Lord over All had told him that he was to make Joshua the leader in his place, when he came to die. And so now at the end of his long talk he calls Joshua to him—the brave man, you remember, who had come back from the land of Canaan and felt so ashamed when the people of Israel were afraid about the giants.

Then Moses laid his hand on Joshua's head, and told the people that they were to follow this new leader, and that Joshua should guide them across the Jordan; and as he said this he pointed to the Promised Land. These were his last words to them: "I am one hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in; and the Lord hath said to me that I should not go over the Jordan. But he will go there before thee, and Joshua shall lead thee, as the Lord hath said. Be strong and of good courage; fear not, and the Lord will not fail thee nor forsake thee."

And he ended with those words to Joshua: "Be strong and of good cheer, for thou shalt go with these people into the land which the Lord hath promised to their fathers, and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. The Lord will go with thee, he will be with thee and will not fail thee nor forsake thee. Fear not; neither be dismayed."

It was a long, long talk he gave the people, and I am sure they had listened in order to hear every word of it. Then at last, as he came to the end, he knew that the time had come when he should die.

And so the Ruler of the World told him to depart from the people and to go to the top of a high mountain called Mount Nebo. And then Moses went away, all alone, and climbed painfully and slowly to the top of that lofty mountain, which is also called Mount

Pizgah. It was a high mountain, much higher than any other mountains round about; and it was close by the River Jordan, so that from the top of the mountain Moses was told to look down and see there stretched out before him the Promised Land, the land which had been promised to Abraham and to Isaac and to Jacob.

Then the Lord said to Moses: "This is the land which I promised to Abraham and to Isaac and to Jacob; I will give it unto thy people; now I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over there." And Moses stood gazing at the beautiful country for a long, long time, thinking of the future and of what might happen to the Children of Israel whom he had been leading about for forty years in that Wilderness.

He hoped that their trials had come to an end. He knew he deserved the punishment that had come upon him; and he was only too glad that he had been allowed to look into the country far away, the Land of Canaan. As he stood there on the mountain he came to his end, and was buried there—but in what way, we do not know, because, as we are told, "No man knoweth of his sepulchre to this day." Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died, and his eye was not dimmed, nor his natural force abated.

And thus we close the story of the life of this great leader of the Children of Israel.

TO THE TEACHER: This lesson should also involve a complete review of the life of Moses, going back over each lesson and the "Memory Verses" throughout the whole of Part III. Show a picture of Mount Nebo—also a photograph of the "Moses" by Michael Angelo, taking care however to comment on the "horns" as a fanciful addition of the artist, introduced by him as a symbol of strength, and not implying that the horns had really been there. The various personal traits of the Leader of the Israelites should be dwelt upon, and the children encouraged to

give a continuous narrative of his whole life. Contrast the elements of weakness and strength in his career, pointing out what to admire and what not to admire, drawing a very solemn picture of Moses alone on the Mount, viewing from a distance the "Promised Land!"

MEMORY VERSE: *Be strong and of good courage; fear not and the Lord will not fail thee or forsake thee.*

PART IV.

CONQUERING THE LAND OF CANAAN.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Crossing the Jordan.

We have come now to the time when the Children of Israel were to enter the Promised Land. They had been waiting, wandering about for forty years in the Wilderness, as you remember. Moses had died after having looked out on the Promised Land from the top of Mount Pizgah.

Everything had changed since the time when the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea, chased by the soldiers of the King of Egypt. All the grown men who had gone over that sea at that time, were now dead. Those who could look back upon what happened then, could only recall it as a memory of their childhood.

I must tell you now how they entered the Land of Canaan, and what they had to do there. While we speak of them as the *Children* of Israel, you can see that many of them were quite along in years; perhaps some of them with gray hair; they had had to go through a great deal there in the Wilderness, and they had learned much through hard experience. They had had anything but an easy time of it. But, in this way, they had learned how to obey rules, and to do as they were told to do. This was what came the hardest for them, and that is why they had not been allowed before this time to go over into the Promised Land.

Perhaps you have already learned about the way we

usually speak of the Israelites of those days? I mean by this, the way they were divided up. It may be that you have heard of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. In my story I have not said much before about these twelve tribes; because when the people had crossed the Red Sea, forty years before, they were just one great crowd of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children, being led by Moses and Aaron. But during the time of waiting in that Wilderness, they had been divided up into what we call "tribes;" that is to say, those who had descended from *one* of the sons of Jacob were called after that son's name; and all those who had descended from another son, were called after that other son's name. And since Jacob had had twelve sons, you see there would be twelve tribes. There was the "Tribe of Judah," and the "Tribe of Benjamin," and the "Tribe of Simeon," and the "Tribe of Dan," and all the other tribes. The leader of them all now was Joshua.

They had come to the borders of Canaan, where they could look over and see the land to which they were going; but the first thing they had to do was to cross a great river. I do not mean by this, a river as great as the Mississippi or the Amazon. Yet, we have heard so much about it, and its name has been spoken of so many times in the history of the world, that somehow one always thinks of it as something "great." It was a narrow stream, although at certain times in the year, very deep and swift. We have already told you something about it in the other stories, which you will remember. I am sure that you have not forgotten about Abraham and Lot, and how Lot had chosen the Plain of the "Jordan." And it is this River Jordan which we are now talking about.

You see, the Children of Israel had come back at last to the borders of the very land where their forefather Abraham lived hundreds of years before. Already at that time it was promised to Abraham for his family by the Lord, the Ruler of the World; and now the descendants of Abraham, all these hundreds

of thousands of people, were beginning to see how this promise was to be kept. They had been away from this country for a long, long while, so that I fancy they would have felt more at home in Egypt than now in the Land of Canaan. But they were only too glad to think that they should come to this new country, because here they could be a free people, whereas in Egypt they had been slaves.

I like to picture to myself that vast army of people waiting there on the other side of the River Jordan, with their leader Joshua, until the word should be given for them to pass over. They had learned patience, and stood ready to follow the command of Joshua.

You might suppose that they were dreaming of crossing that river and settling down *at once* in that rich country where that great bunch of grapes had come from, the land "flowing with milk and honey." But no, they had no such dreams. They had not forgotten what those spies or messengers, who had been over there and seen the country, had told them; how there were giants in that country, and mighty men of valor, and how they would have to fight for a long while before they would be able to conquer the land and settle there.

And while they were waiting, that great army of people, with the little children, boys and girls, wondering what was going to happen, and the fathers and mothers thoughtful over all that was before them, the word came to Joshua, as we are told, bidding him to lead the people over the Jordan. And this is what was said to Joshua: "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou and all this people, unto the land which I do give them, even to the Children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, to you have I given it, as I spake unto Moses. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong, and of good courage; for thou shalt cause this people to

inherit the land which I promised their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, to observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded thee; turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest have good success whithersoever thou goest. Then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and thou shalt have good success. Be strong and of good courage; be not afrighted, neither be thou dismayed."

I know you will be glad to have heard how all this was said to Joshua, because it shows what a brave, good, strong, noble old soldier, Joshua must have been. We could see that the people could trust him, just as the Lord over All trusted him. Hence, whenever we think about the Children of Israel entering the Promised Land, we always think how they were led by this brave soldier, Joshua. You know, whenever a man is to be a leader, he has to make himself trusted, otherwise the people will not follow him; and Joshua was a great leader, because he showed that he could be trusted.

As soon as Joshua heard these words, and the command had come to him, at once he set about doing whatever had to be done so that the people might march at once. They had to get ready for their journey, taking their food with them, and all their possessions.

And this is what Joshua said to the officers of the people: "Pass through the midst of the camp, and command the people, saying, Prepare you food, for within three days ye are to pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land."

Now, it so happened that two or three of the tribes were to be allowed to stay on that side of the Jordan, because the country was rich there. They were not, however, to be allowed to remain behind as yet, but were first to help the rest of the tribes in conquering the land on the other side of the river. They were all one people, and they were to fight together and serve each other. And so Joshua said to these special tribes: "Your wives and your little ones and your

cattle shall abide in this land on this side of the Jordan; but ye shall pass over before your brethren armed, all the mighty sons of valor, and shall help them; until your brethren find rest and have possessed the land promised to them. Then ye shall return unto this land of your possession, and possess it."

What do you suppose they said in answer to Joshua? I am sure if it had been the Children of Israel forty years before, they would have refused and said no, being afraid, or else 'selfishly unwilling' to take the risks asked of them. We never forget how the Children of Israel in those former times, had kept wishing for the "flesh pots of Egypt" when they could not have their own way.

But it was different now. It is plain enough why those people should have been kept there all those years in the Wilderness, being educated. This is what they said to Joshua: "All that thou hast commanded us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us we will go. According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee. Whosoever he be that shall rebel against thy commandment, and shall not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death; only be strong and of a good courage."

The three days had passed and everything was ready for the march. But as this was to be a great event, which Joshua wished to be remembered for all future time, he wanted that everything should be very solemn about it. The people were not to rush ahead just as they pleased, finding their way as best they could across the river, and over into the new country. First a number of the priests were to take the Ark and carry it before them into the river. When they came to the middle of the river they were to stand there and wait, holding the ark, while all the people passed by on to the other side.

Hence the officers said to the people: 'When ye see the Ark, and the priests bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it about two thousand

cubits by measure. Come not near unto it, but let it first go before you, that ye may know the way by which ye must go; for ye have not passed this way heretofore."

And Joshua spoke to the priests, saying: "Take up the Ark and pass over before the people."

Then the priests did as they were told, and went ahead with the ark until they had come into the river, and there they stood, waiting solemnly, while all the vast number of people passed over to the other side. I suppose the fathers and mothers carried their little children in their arms, while the older boys and girls followed close behind. Each tribe was going by itself; until at last all were on the other side.

But now that they had all safely reached the other bank of the river, and were actually standing on ground which was a part of the Land of Canaan, it was very important that something should be done to mark the spot where they had come over, and to leave a kind of memorial there. This would be something which people in after times might see. And when they looked upon it they would say to themselves, this was where our forefathers crossed the Jordan and first entered the Promised Land.

It all had to be done very solemnly. And so the Lord over All said to Joshua: "Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man, and command ye them, saying, take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and carry them over with you, and lay them down in the lodging place where ye shall lodge this night."

Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had chosen, out of every tribe a man, and he said to them: "Take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel."

And the twelve men took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, and they carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there. And in this way they placed their me-

morial beside the river Jordan, to show the place where the people had crossed over.

TO THE TEACHER: At this point turn back and have the children recall the narrative when the promise we are speaking of was made, running over the incidents connected with it. Emphasize the importance of the preparations which were going on and the reasons for them. Dwell upon the point about being obedient to rules and how much trouble came because the Children of Israel did not learn this sooner. The language used to Joshua and the words to the people might be recited aloud by the children. Touch upon the excited feelings of the people now that the great movement was at hand and they were actually to enter the Land of Canaan. Show a picture of the river Jordan; and also one of the Plain of the Jordan.

MEMORY VERSES: *I will not fail thee nor forsake thee. Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed.*

All that thou hast commanded us we will do; whosoever thou sendest us we will go.

CHAPTER XXX.

Conquering the City of Jericho.

I suppose you keep thinking about the time when Abraham lived in this land of Canaan, and how kindly the people had treated him there. At that time it seemed that they were a kindly disposed class of persons. Why, then, you ask, should the Children of Israel have been so afraid of entering this new country; and why should they have thought about it as a land where they would have to do a great deal of fighting in order to conquer it?

But you see, a great many changes can take place in the course of a few hundred years. When you come to think of it, a hundred years is a long time. It may be, too, that another class of people had moved into this land since the time when Abraham lived there. At any rate, we are told that now when the Children of Israel were to enter this Land of Canaan, the people living there were a very bad kind of people. Perhaps those who had been living there had grown wicked. But I should rather suppose that the wickedness of the people in this Land of Canaan at that time had come from other persons who had moved there later on. We know that, *now*, at any rate, there was a great deal of wickedness in this Land of Canaan. The people were almost as bad as those who had been living in those cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, which I told you about.

On this account the Children of Israel had received a command which I almost hate to tell you of. It was something stern and awful. Yet I suppose that the Lord over All felt that there was no other way. He wanted that a better kind of people should live in

this land. Hence he told Joshua and the Children of Israel that they were to conquer the people of Canaan, and put them all to death. It was an awful punishment for the wickedness of that country. But the Children of Israel felt there was only one thing for them to do,—having received the command, they had to obey.

Now, it so happened that right near where they had crossed the River Jordan, and where the memorial had been placed, there was a great city, which was called Jericho. The first thing Joshua had to do, therefore, was to conquer the city of Jericho. And they could not wait long, because the city was close by, and the armies from Jericho might come out soon to attack them.

Everything now depended on whether the people of Israel would show the right kind of courage. A good many of them may never have been in battle. Sometimes, too, people who are very brave in the face of certain dangers, yet lose all that bravery when they become very much excited. Great battles in history have been lost just in this way, where the leaders had supposed that the soldiers were very brave indeed, but where the soldiers "lost their heads," as we say, forgot themselves in the great excitement, and before they knew it, turned about and ran away.

I am sure that Joshua knew all about this, and feared very much lest the Children of Israel should act in this way. They were now to be put to the test. As for Joshua, it was all right and safe enough as far as he was concerned. He had been tried in the fire, and the people knew that his courage would never fail him.

In the meantime, the army belonging to the city of Jericho, being afraid of the great host of people who had just crossed the Jordan, had retired inside the city. In those days all the great cities had high walls around them. We do not build such walls around our cities nowadays; but Jericho had a great wall of this kind all around it, so that the people had to pass through gates in the wall when they went in or out of the city.

And so the army of the Israelites came up to the walls of Jericho and saw the gates shut, and they began to wonder how they would conquer the city.

But one thing I must tell you about, which they did just before they came up to the gates of this city. There was first a festival, as we call it, which they had to keep, called the Festival of the Passover. It was what we should think of nowadays as a sort of memorial day. Moses had told the people that they should set aside one day every year in memory of the time when the Children of Israel escaped from the land of Egypt. In a sense, indeed, the Passover was a Memorial Day of the founding of the nation of the Israelites.

At any rate, the first thing they did after crossing the Jordan was to keep this memorial day or Passover. This was the great festival which was kept through coming ages by the Children of Israel. Wherever they might be in the world, they never forgot their Passover.

Then, too, one other change had to take place which was very important to them, now that they had entered the Land of Canaan. Do you remember what they had to eat for the most part during all those years in the Wilderness? "Manna," you say? Yes, it was manna; but it seems that this kind of food was only to be found over there in the Wilderness. Now that the people had entered Canaan, they were to have another kind of food, and, as we are told, were to eat of the fruit of the Land of Canaan. Whether they liked this change or not I do not know. It must have seemed a little peculiar to them at first, because they had been used for so many years to that other kind of food. But this change must have made them feel all the more strange for a time, in the new country to which they had come.

But now to go back to the Children of Israel before the walls of Jericho. The question was, how they were to conquer the city; or, rather, I fancy, in the mind of Joshua, it was the question how to keep up the courage of the Israelites; because, I suspect, he knew

how the city could be conquered, if only he could feel perfectly sure of the people themselves.

But it seems that the Great Ruler had decided to tell Joshua what to do. And it came to pass when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold there stood a man over against him, with his sword drawn in his hand. And Joshua said to him: "Art thou for us, or for our enemies?" And he said: "Nay, but as captain of the Host of the Lord am I now come."

Then Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and said to the man: "What saith the Lord unto his servant?" And the Captain of the Host of the Lord said unto Joshua: "Put off thy shoes from thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy." And Joshua did so.

Then the man, speaking for the Lord, said unto Joshua: "See, I have given unto thy hand Jericho and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor. And ye shall compass the city, all of the men of war going about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. And the seven priests shall bear the ark, with trumpets, before the people. And the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. And it shall be, that when they make a long blast with the trumpets, and when ye shall hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the people shall go up and conquer the city."

I suppose Joshua saw what all this meant. It may have been a way of fostering the courage of the people, so that by the time the seventh day would come they would be full of enthusiasm, eager at last to go ahead bravely and capture Jericho.

It was rather an odd sort of a thing to do, this marching solemnly around the city day after day, in perfect silence, while the priests went before carrying the ark. But Joshua knew that it would all come out right.

He called the priests and said to them: "Take up the ark and let seven priests bear seven trumpets be-

fore the ark." And it was so that when Joshua had spoken, the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets passed on and blew the trumpets; and the ark was carried behind them; while the people marched with them around the city. Joshua had told the people, saying: "Ye shall not shout, nor let your voice be heard, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth until the day I bid you shout, then shall ye shout."

Upon the second day they compassed the city once more, and again on the third day, and so they did for six days.

It must have been a splendid discipline for those people, to go marching that way day after day, walking around the city, without saying a word. This was what we might call drill, and drill of a very hard kind. People, as you know, in their excitement like to shout and make a noise; but sometimes the people that do the most shouting make the poorest fighters. A man cannot be a good soldier until he has learned what we speak of as *self-control*.

You see, Joshua by this means was teaching the people self-control, and in this way making good soldiers of them. I fancy they would have enjoyed that marching around the city immensely; but the pleasure of it all must have been nearly spoiled for them, just because they could not shout or make a noise.

As they kept on day after day, they began to see, themselves, how much more firm and self-possessed they were. They would observe how they could trust themselves better because they were getting a certain kind of control over themselves. It was pretty hard; but as they began to see the reason for all this, it troubled them less. They knew that the seven days would come to an end before long. I can fancy Joshua each day, as the people marched by, standing there watching their faces, to note whether they were showing the right kind of spirit. And each day he must have felt more and more encouraged by the firmness he saw in their faces, and the brave, manly way in which they walked as they moved by.

At the end of the six days Joshua could see by the look on the faces of the people that they were ready for battle. Now he understood fully what good there was in waiting this way for six days.

And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they arose early at the dawn of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times. By that time, you can be sure, they were ready to shout. They had controlled themselves long enough. But first Joshua told them very carefully what they were to do. It was very important that the people should act unselfishly, and not take anything which they might find for themselves. He told them that they were to destroy all living people in the city, and all the animals in the city, save just one family, which had dealt kindly with the messengers or spies, sent not long before by Joshua, to find out about the country. But all the silver and gold and everything of that kind was to be kept sacred as something for the Lord.

Then all at once, as the Children of Israel stood there waiting in silence after they had compassed the city seven times, Joshua said unto the people: "Shout." So the people shouted, and the priests blew the trumpets. It must have been a tremendous roar of sound, all that excitement and shouting of all those thousands of thousands of people. It was a mighty army of brave men. And when they shouted with a great shout they went bravely ahead and conquered the city of Jericho. Just how it all happened we shall never know. We are told that the walls of the city fell down as if of themselves, and then it was an easy matter to accomplish the rest. And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both men and women, both young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with edge of the sword—save just the one family I have told you about. And they burnt the city with fire and all there was therein; only the silver and the gold, and the vessels of brass, and of iron, they saved for the treasury of the House of the Lord—because I suppose they hoped ere long to build a temple to their Lord, where they could use all this gold and silver.

Joshua's mind was now at peace. The first great victory had been won, and the people had shown themselves brave and obedient soldiers. They could trust him; and now he felt sure that he could trust them likewise.

Yet it was no easy task ahead. This first victory around Jericho had given the people some idea of how much they would have to go through in conquering the land of Canaan. There were a number of great cities in that country, like Jericho. One after another would have to be conquered; and they saw that it would be a long, long while before they could settle down and feel at home there.

I suppose, too, they must have found it a very painful work. There is something cruel and sad about war of any kind, even where the war may be just and right. It is something awful for people to be obliged to fight and kill each other in this way; yet, at that time, the Israelites had to do it. They had been told that they must put to death all those wicked people whom they found in the Land of Canaan.

TO THE TEACHER: The ethical element in this lesson is not very striking. But the feature of discipline could be talked about, as most necessary when people have anything to do *together*. Then, too, there is the point about self-control. Allude to the straightforward, soldierly bearing of Joshua in the way he conducted himself. It must rest with the teacher to decide just how far the supernatural element in this story is to be introduced. The only consideration here is that the more this special side is dwelt upon in the account the less does the ethical feature appear.

MEMORY VERSE: *Ye shall not shout, nor let your voice be heard, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout, then shall ye shout.*

CHAPTER XXXI.

Wars of the Israelites in Canaan.

It would take a great while for me even to begin to tell you all that the Children of Israel went through now for a number of years in trying to conquer the land of Canaan. There were a great many people living in that country—different tribes or kingdoms with large cities, and kings ruling over them. Some of the people were men of great height, such as we should now call giants. Then, too, while these kings and people were very wicked indeed, they were great fighters, and gave any amount of trouble to the Children of Israel.

The story of the Israelites for a long while was therefore one of war and strife, while they went on having battles with one tribe after another, and conquering one city after another.

I ought perhaps to tell you about one sad event which took place not long after they had set out to conquer the land. You see while they were pretty good and brave at the outset, and obedient for the most part to the commands of Joshua, yet among such an immense number of people we should feel pretty sure that there would be some not quite so good as others; some here and there who could not quite be trusted. As you may know, there are persons who can resist a small temptation, but cannot stand up against a temptation that is very great. Just in the same way boys or girls who may think themselves strong and true and obedient, yet sometimes when a temptation is great, will forget themselves and disobey.

It called for a great deal of self-control on the part

of everybody in that great army always to do just as they were told, and never in any way to break the rules laid over them. There was one great temptation which they had to be fighting all the time. As they went through the land capturing the cities, putting the wicked people to death and seizing their property, now and then they must have found it pretty hard not to take some of this property for themselves. They had had very little property of their own when wandering in the Wilderness, you remember; during all those years they had had a hard time of it. Now they saw, if only they could keep a little of this wealth for themselves, which they were taking away from all those wicked people, how they would be better off and have money so as to buy almost anything they cared for. People do like to have money—especially gold and silver. And it seems that there was a great deal of this gold and silver among those wicked tribes of Canaan.

But for a time the Children of Israel did as they were commanded to do. They had been told that they must keep none of that gold and silver, or any other of that property for themselves; whatever they took was to be handed over to Joshua, and not to belong to them personally at all.

I suppose they began to be a little proud, some of them, owing to their victories there in Canaan, and to the way they were conquering the country and capturing all those cities. It may be that they got to boasting, and talked quite loudly about how brave they were. But, as you know, there is nothing much worse than pride and boasting. It makes people selfish, and it makes them careless, so that they forget themselves, lose their self-control, and do what they know they ought not to do and what they would usually be ashamed of doing.

After the Children of Israel had been going on gaining one victory after another, suddenly, in one battle, a number of them were defeated. It seems there was a city called Ai, and the people of that city were called the people of Ai. It was one of the important cities of Canaan, we assume, but there were not many people

living in it. Those who had been sent out to find about the country, came back and said to Joshua: "Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; make not all the people to toil thither; for they are but few."

Joshua thought this was wise, and therefore sent only about three thousand of the Israelites, supposing that they would be able to capture and destroy the city of Ai. But lo and behold, it turned out another way; instead of winning the battle with the people there, they lost it and were driven back, and a number of them were killed. This was the first time that the Israelites had not won the victory since they entered the Promised Land.

Now the secret of it all was just this: I will tell you about it in advance, so that you can understand why it happened. One of those men I have mentioned, who perhaps had been proud and boastful, and who was of the three thousand men sent against Ai, had found some money there, some gold and silver, and a beautiful mantle; then instead of seizing it and turning it over to the leader to be given to Joshua, he kept it for himself. The temptation had been great, and he had given in to it and broken the command laid upon him as well as upon all the people. I fancy that many of the others with him saw him do it, and knew that he was guilty; yet instead of punishing him, or warning him in any way, they just overlooked it, perhaps with the feeling that if he should not be punished, by and by they might do it themselves.

When people do wrong, however, and know quite well what they are doing, before long it is about sure that they will grow uneasy. There is nothing that takes away a man's courage so much as being ashamed over something he has done. It seems to take all the spirit out of him, so that he hardly knows himself. Many a man who once was brave and strong, afterwards just because of such a feeling of shame on account of something he has been guilty of, finds out that his courage has all gone.

This, surely, is just what happened to those three

thousand men who went up to capture the city of Ai. They must have lost their courage, because they felt ashamed over what their comrade had done, or because they had allowed him to do it; and this sense of shame took their courage all away; they felt so mean about it all, that they could not fight; they just wanted to turn about and run. And that is what they did; instead of going ahead and capturing the city, they lost heart and were afraid; so that when the men of Ai came out to attack them, away they ran for their lives, back to Joshua.

We cannot help feeling the greatest pity for poor Joshua at this moment. He had been so brave and true as a leader, and had trusted the people so fully; and now came this defeat, and he did not know what to make of it. At first he blamed himself, as many a brave good man will do, thinking that somehow he must have done wrong or been guilty in some way. At once he noticed how all the rest of the Children of Israel lost heart because of this defeat. As we are told: "The hearts of the people melted, and became as water." It is quite certain that they all felt that something wrong had been done, although most of them did not know what it was. But their first thought now, I suppose, was to fly back across the River Jordan to the Wilderness, out of which they had come.

And Joshua, as we are told, rent his clothes and fell to the earth upon his face, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust upon their heads. And Joshua said to the Lord, the Ruler of the World: "Alas! wherefore hast thou brought this people over the Jordan to deliver us into the hand of the wicked tribes of Canaan to cause us to perish; would that we had been content to dwell beyond the Jordan. What shall I say now that Israel hath turned their backs before their enemies? for the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall compass us around and cut off our name from the earth."

And the Lord answered Joshua and told him why all this had happened, saying: "Get thee up, wherefore art thou thus fallen upon thy face? Israel hath done

wrong; they have broken my command; they have taken silver and gold and kept it for themselves. Therefore the Children of Israel are turned cowards, and cannot stand before their enemies. I will not be with you any more except ye destroy the guilty one."

If Joshua was sad before, I suppose he was still more sad now; it was the first blow to come to him, the first time he had heard of the Children of Israel breaking the commands which had been given to them. His heart sank within him. It was bad enough for him to feel that the people had lost their courage, but still worse for him to know that one or more of them had been guilty of evil.

But there was only one thing for him to do. He was the leader and ruler. He had to find the guilty one and have him punished. It was like punishing some one belonging to his own family. You know how hard it is sometimes for fathers and mothers to punish their own children, even when they know that their children deserve it. And that is just about the way Joshua felt, now that he had to punish the guilty one of the Children of Israel. The Great Ruler had told him how to find out the man who was guilty; and so he called all the tribes together, and singled out the tribe to which the guilty man belonged, and then he found the family in that tribe, of which this man was a member; and he looked them over, one face after another, until he saw a guilty look in the eye of a man whose name was Achan. Already, I am sure that the man felt ashamed, and was only too anxious to confess the evil conduct he had been guilty of.

And Joshua looked Achan in the face and said: "My son, make now confession, and tell me what thou hast done. Hide it not from me."

It was an awful moment in the history of the Children of Israel, the first time since they had crossed the Jordan that one of their number had to be punished for a crime. They felt somehow that a shame had come upon them all; as if, in a way, they were all to blame; and Achan himself knew that he had brought shame on all the Children of Israel, and he wanted to go away and hide.

But he stepped forward, glad enough to have the chance to confess his wickedness, saying: "Of a truth I have sinned, and thus and thus have I done. When I saw among the spoil a goodly mantle, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them! and behold they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it."

You see, this man had broken the tenth commandment; he had been guilty of covetousness, and that had led him to stealing, or taking this property which had not belonged to him.

Joshua at once sent messengers, and they ran into the tent of Achan; and behold it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it; and they took the stolen goods from the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua. And now Joshua had to be the judge and pronounce the punishment of death for this awful crime. And he said to Achan: "Why hast thou troubled us. The Lord Over All shall trouble thee this day." And then they took him outside the camp and stoned him with stones until he died, and his body was burned with fire. And they raised over his body a great heap of stones to mark the spot, so that in future times when people came there they should remember the crime of Achan, and how it had been punished.

I doubt whether Joshua was ever quite the same happy man again that he had been before. He went on bravely leading the people; but there was this sad ache in his heart, in knowing that one of the Children of Israel had been guilty of a crime, and feeling now not quite sure whether all the people could be trusted in the way he had once trusted them. It shows how the evil deed of one man can injure hundreds of thousands. Now that Achan had been guilty of this crime; he had set an example which others might follow, in spite of the awful punishment put upon him.

But for the time being Joshua and the people had done the best they knew how; they had made the guilty man confess his crime, and they had punished

him for it. Then their courage came back, and they went and conquered the city of Ai. And when the men of Ai looked from their camp, where they were waiting to give battle, they saw and behold the smoke of their city ascended up to heaven.

TO THE TEACHER: There is opportunity in this lesson to talk over the general subject of Temptation and why it is that people give in to it. Some of the motives or reasons leading people to give way in this manner could be dwelt upon, especially pride or self-assurance. Touch upon the blow which this experience gave to Joshua, and how it must have stunned him; how, too, the rest of the people must have felt in the shame which was brought upon them all, as if somehow they had all been guilty. Point out the mean element of selfishness in Achan and how he must have despised himself when he came to think it all over. On the other hand, in these lessons it would be better not to say too much about the slaughtering of the Canaanites, as it presents a sad and gruesome picture.

MEMORY VERSES: *The hearts of the people melted and became as water.*

My son, make now confession, and tell me what thou hast done. Hide it not from me.

Why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this day.

Of a truth I have sinned against the Lord and thus and thus have I done.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The Last Days of Joshua.

We do not know just how long Joshua went on as a leader of the people, conquering the land of Canaan. As I have already said to you, it must have been a great while. One city after another was seized and destroyed; one king after another, defeated and put to death.

You may like to know about the way Joshua captured five of those kings in this land of Canaan. They had quite a large army, and I am sure that if Joshua had been at all given to fear he would have lost his courage before them. But the Great Ruler said to Joshua: "There shall not be a man of them to stand before thee."

It was a great battle which he had to fight with the army of those five kings, lasting far into the night. But in the end Joshua won the victory. The kings, themselves, however, managed somehow to escape, and Joshua had to pursue them and capture them. As we are told, those five kings fled and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah. And it was told Joshua, saying: "The five kings are found hidden in the cave at Makkedah." And Joshua said: "Roll great stones unto the mouth of the cave, and set men by it for to keep them. But stay not yet; pursue after your enemies and smite them."

And it came to pass, when Joshua and the Children of Israel had made an end of slaying their enemies, that all the people returned to the camp at Makkedah, Then Joshua said: "Open the mouth of the cave and bring forth these five kings out of the mouth of the cave." And they did so, and brought forth those five

kings out of the cave. And when they had brought forth those kings unto Joshua, Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the chiefs of the men of war which went with him: "Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings." And they came near and put their feet upon the necks of them, and Joshua said: "Fear not, nor be dismayed; be strong and of good courage; for thus shall it be done to all your enemies against whom you fight." Then they smote those kings and put them to death, according to the command they had received.

Joshua was now quite an old man; he had indeed been much younger when he had led the people over the Jordan into the Promised Land. The Children of Israel had now conquered a great part of Canaan, if not, indeed, the whole of it. As we are told: "The Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he promised to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it and dwelt therein, and the Lord gave them rest round about according to all that he had promised unto their fathers; and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them. There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had promised unto the house of Israel; all came to pass."

Yet for some reason, while they had conquered the land, they had not destroyed all the kings or people there. It may be that they grew tired, or that they felt somehow as if it were too much for them to do in a few years. It may be that the Great Ruler himself had pity on Joshua, because Joshua was such an old man. He may have told the Children of Israel that for a time they could wait before going on destroying the inhabitants of Canaan. But, at any rate, they had done a great deal, and now possessed a large proportion of the Promised Land.

You remember, however, that two or three of the tribes had left their wives and children, and flocks and herds, back on the other side of the Jordan, where they were to return after they had helped the rest of the Children of Israel to conquer the land of Canaan. They had been brave and unselfish and followed Joshua,

fighting the wicked Canaanites; and now Joshua felt that it was right that they should go back to their wives and children. So Joshua called them together and said to them: "Ye have hearkened to my voice in all that I commanded you; ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day. And now the Lord hath given rest unto your brethren. Therefore now turn ye and get you into your tents beyond Jordan. Only take diligent heed to obey the commandment and the law which Moses gave."

So Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they departed to go back across the River Jordan.

In the meantime the land had to be divided up between the different tribes of Israel. This was no easy task for Joshua. But it was done by lot. The land was marked out in portions, and then each tribe drew by lot one of these portions, and went and settled there.

It may be that by this time peace had come back to the heart of brave old Joshua, in spite of that crime which Achan had been guilty of when they were first conquering the land of Canaan. He had led the people into the Promised Land, until they had conquered and possessed it; and now in his old age he saw the tribes settling down there, and making a home for themselves. He knew that the time had come for him to die. As we are told: Joshua was old, and well stricken in years. And he called for the elders of Israel, and for their judges, and for their officers, and said unto them: "I am old and well stricken in years. Behold this day I am going the way of all the earth. And ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, not one thing hath failed thereof. Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and truth. Choose ye this day whom ye will serve. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. But if ye forsake the Lord, then he will turn and punish you."

And the people said unto Joshua: "Nay, but we will serve the Lord."

And Joshua took a great stone and set it up there under an oak tree, and he said to the people: "Behold

this stone shall be a witness of what ye have promised."

You see, the one thing Joshua feared was that after he was gone the Children of Israel might come to serve the wicked deities of the people who had been there in Canaan. He wanted that they should keep the commands that Moses had given them in the Wilderness. But he knew how the Children of Israel long years before had made that golden calf at Mount Sinai, and worshiped an idol, falling into the worst kind of superstitions; and he knew that the people of Canaan also worshiped idols, mere images of wood and stone, and that they had wicked customs which he did not want that the Children of Israel should follow; and that was why he made this last plea to them, saying: "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve."

And then Joshua died, being an hundred and ten years old. He had fought a good fight, and lived bravely and well. And the Children of Israel never forgot what he had done for them in leading them into the Promised Land.

TO THE TEACHER: As we go on in these stories it would be well to fix in the mind of the children the names of the great leaders and prominent characters we have come upon. At this point a list of these might be read out and the names written on the blackboard, beginning with Abraham and continuing down to Joshua—so that each name shall mean something to the young people all their lives. The charge of Joshua should be committed to memory with much emphasis on the phrase: "Choose ye whom ye will serve." A picture might be shown of Joshua from Sargent's "Prophets" in the Boston Public Library.

MEMORY VERSES: *There shall not be a man of them to stand before thee. Fear not, or be dismayed; be strong and of good courage; for thus shall it be done to all your enemies against whom ye fight.*

Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and truth. Choose ye this day whom ye will serve. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Story of Samson.

After Joshua's death the Children of Israel settled down in the land of Canaan, each tribe in that part of the country which it had received by lot. And I suppose they hoped to go on now for hundreds of years, having a happy time of it, in possession of this Promised Land. The tribes who were to live on the other side of Jordan had gone back to their homes.

And now, for the first time, there was peace in the land of Canaan. There was no talk of war; fathers did not have to leave their wives and children, or their happy homes, in order to go out and be soldiers; they could stay and work near their families, and help to bring up and educate their boys and girls, and take care of the home. They began to have cities of their own here and there in Canaan, and to have the feeling now that they really owned the country.

They had been so successful in conquering the other tribes of people in that land, and in seizing the cities they found there, that for a long time the people who had been living in Canaan dared not do anything to defend themselves. But they had not all been killed off, those wicked people I have told you about. Perhaps they just lived on, keeping themselves out of sight as much as possible; and the Children of Israel may have thought that there never would be any more trouble over those conquered tribes of Canaanites. They felt themselves quite above all those evil people,—and rightly so, because they had better habits, and were a better people.

But the time came by and by when the Canaanites began to grow in numbers again, and to be more im-

portant; they had kept quiet for a long while, but now they were much stronger and so they set out to attack the Israelites and make war upon them in order to get possession of their country again. This was something very surprising to the Children of Israel, which they had not expected at all, and they hardly knew what to make of it. Then, too, they had no great leader at this time. Joshua had not named any one to take his place, in the way that Moses had named Joshua to be the leader of the Children of Israel. Each tribe went on managing its own affairs in its own way. The people got along for a time without any general form of government such as we have nowadays; they were held together because they were of one race, speaking one language; also because of the memory of former times, and of former leaders, Moses and Joshua, and of their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Now, however, when the Canaanites began to show their strength once more, and to make war on the Children of Israel, of course the Israelites felt the need of some kind of government. But as they had no one leader, they did the best they could in fighting their enemies, especially those Canaanites who were called the Philistines. From time to time one or another man would rise up unusually brave and strong, and help one or more of the tribes in fighting these Philistines, or the Canaanites. But the fact is, they were getting the worst of it.

What is more, they had begun to have some of the bad ways of the Canaanites; at times forgetting their Great Ruler, and even worshipping the idols of the people of Canaan. This was something very bad, indeed, so that we feel they deserved punishment, and they got it more and more.

Now I have to tell you a story about one of the leaders who rose up in those days among the Children of Israel and helped them very much in fighting the Philistines. This man was considered to be the strongest man who ever lived, and his name was Samson.

There was a certain man of the family of the Danites whose name was Manoah. He and his wife had

not had any children, but wanted very much to have a little son or daughter. At last, we are told, a messenger came from the Lord, and said to Manoah's wife that she should have a son, but warned her that she should make of him what was called a Nazarite, meaning by this that in some special way he should be a servant of the Lord.

When Manoah heard about this he did not know what to think. He wanted very much to meet this messenger himself. And one day the messenger came to the wife as she was out in the field, when Manoah, her husband, was not with her, and the woman made haste and ran and told her husband, and said unto him: "Behold, the man has appeared unto me that came unto me the other day." And Manoah rose and went after his wife, and came to the man and said unto him: "Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman?" And he said: "I am." And Manoah said: "Now let thy words come to pass; what shall be the manner of the child, and what shall be his work?" And the messenger said unto Manoah about the same that he had said to Manoah's wife when he first came to her.

Manoah and his wife now felt pleased and glad to think that they should have a son. By and by the child came to them, and they called his name Samson. We do not hear very much about him when he was a boy; but I am sure that he must have been very strong, and oftentimes surprised his father and mother with what he could do in this way. No other boys of his age could have shown the same amount of strength. In fact, even at that time he must have been stronger than his own father. I have no doubt that Manoah was glad to think of all this, because he could feel that his boy might grow up and become a leader among the Israelites, and help them in their battles with the Philistines. And this is just what happened. When Samson was grown up, as I have told you, he had enormous strength, such as no man living nowadays could ever show. Even wild animals, such as lions or tigers, must have been afraid of him, while he had no fear of them, for he was stronger than any lion or tiger.

One time, for instance, he was on his way down to the Philistines, and he met a young lion, and behold! the young lion roared against him. Perhaps not another man in all the land of Canaan but would have stood still or tried to run away; even the giants of those days would have been afraid. But not so with Samson; he rushed boldly at the lion, seized him by the jaws and tore him to pieces, although he had nothing in his hand.

Sometime later on, when he was passing that way, he noticed the body of the lion which he had killed; and behold! there was a swarm of bees in the body of the lion and honey; and he took it in his hand and went on, eating as he went.

When, therefore, he came to the Philistines he said to them: "Let me now put forth a riddle unto you. If ye can declare it unto me within seven days and find out, I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of raiment. But if ye cannot declare it unto me, then shall ye give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of raiment." And they said unto him: "Put forth thy riddle that we may hear it." And he said unto them: "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." This is the riddle, you see, which they were to explain.

Samson smiled to himself, because he knew that they would never be able to declare the riddle; he was the only one who knew anything about how he had killed the lion and afterward found bees and honey in the body of the lion. Samson appears at first to have been a modest man, not given to boasting, and he had not talked about his brave deed.

But I shall have to tell you of one weakness of this man Samson. It sometimes happens, you know, that there are people who are very strong with their bodies and yet do not have strong minds. They may be able to do wonderful things with their arms and to astonish everybody with their feats of strength. On the other hand, they may not have self-control and be able to resist temptation, so as to refuse to do what they have made up their minds they will not do. You will

observe this in boys sometimes. You may see the strongest boys, in the presence of whom even larger boys than themselves are afraid; yet they will disobey or do things which they know they will be ashamed of afterward.

Every one who is grown up will understand how important it is to be strong in one's mind as well as in one's body; and how it may be of little use to a man to have the strength in his arms if he has not that strength of mind so that he can keep his good resolutions.

Now we shall see how Samson had only the one kind of strength, and every now and then would fail to keep the resolutions he had made. You see he was strong only on one side.

We shall notice now what took place owing to this lack of strength of mind on the part of Samson in his dealings with the Philistines, to whom he had proposed this riddle. I suppose he was planning to help the Israelites against them, and this was the first step he was taking for that purpose.

But the Philistines went to Samson's wife and threatened her, saying: "Entice thy husband that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire."

I am sorry to say Samson did not have a good wife. She was vain, and she wanted to be able to declare this riddle. She knew that she ought not to ask this of Samson, because her husband had a very important reason for not explaining what he was doing. But she wept before him and would not be comforted, saying: "Thou lovest me not; thou hast put forth a riddle, and hast not told it to me." And he said manfully: "Behold, I have not told it to my father and mother, and shall I tell it to thee?" And she pleaded with him for seven days, until finally it came to pass on the seventh day that he yielded, although he knew that he ought not to do so. Then she told the answer to the riddle to the Philistines.

And so, on the seventh day, the Philistines came to him with their answer, in these words: "What is sweeter than honey, and what is stronger than a lion?"

I am sure that Samson felt heartily ashamed of himself, because he knew that he had been weak and had broken his resolution. But he was determined to punish the Philistines. And so, later on, we are told how he went and caught three hundred foxes and took fire-brands and turned the foxes tail to tail, and put a fire-brand in the midst, between every two tails, and when he had set the brands on fire he let the foxes go into the standing corn of the Philistines and burned up the standing corn and also the olive yards. This was the beginning of the effort Samson was making to attack the Philistines, and in that way trying to help the Israelites against them.

(TO THE TEACHER: The story of Samson exactly as it stands, may not seem to have an ethical element in it. As a man he was rather to be despised than admired. But in this very fact is the lesson to be drawn—how a man because he is weak morally may squander magnificent resources instead of using them for good purposes. One can picture the amount of service which this man could have done for his people with his enormous strength, if it had not been mere brute strength, but had been accompanied with strength of mind or self-control. It can be shown how this weakness made Samson just about as bad morally as the Philistines themselves. Point out, for instance, when he sought to punish the Philistines; how it was more out of desire for revenge than for the purpose of helping his people. One may pity Samson, but not admire him.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The End of the Career of Samson.

You can take it for granted when the Philistines heard how Samson had killed that lion with his own hands and also found how he had caught the three hundred foxes and burned their corn, that they had made up their minds that they must seize him and put him to death if possible.

Then the Philistines went up and pitched in Judah. And the men of Judah said: "Why are ye come up against us?" And they said: "To bind Samson have we come up; to do to him as he has done to us." It seems that he had already defeated a great number of the Philistines in battle, smiting them with very great slaughter. Then three thousand men of Judah went and found Samson and said to him: "Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? What, then, is this that thou hast done? We are come to bind thee that we may deliver thee into the hands of the Philistines."

This was anything but brave on the part of the people of the tribe of Judah, showing how cowardly they had become, and how much they were in need of a leader if ever they were to conquer the Philistines. One cannot help thinking of the good old times, when all the Israelites had fought bravely under the leadership of Joshua.

But Samson said unto them: "Promise me that ye will not put me to death." And they spake unto him, saying: "No, but we will bind thee fast and deliver thee into their hands, but surely we will not kill thee." And they bound him with two new ropes and brought him to the Philistines.

When the Philistines saw him bound, they shouted as they met him. Yet Samson knew what he was doing. He was not given to talking, but quietly waited until the time came for him to act; then, while the Philistines were shouting and boasting, he put forth his strength, and the ropes that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and the bands dropped from off his hands.

By this time Samson was going to show what he could do, and let the Children of Israel see his strength. So he put forth all his efforts in attacking the Philistines. He had to have some kind of a weapon, and what do you suppose he used? Why, as we are told, he found a jawbone of an ass and put forth his hand and took it and smote a thousand men with it. That was enough for the Philistines, and they went back home, thinking it best for a time to let Samson alone.

I suppose now the Children of Israel felt somewhat encouraged over this new leader who was arising in their midst. But still the Philistines were stronger than the Israelites.

And once again Samson undertook to show what he could do. It seems he went to the city of Gaza, and when the people found out about it the Gazites said to themselves: "Samson is come hither." And they laid in wait for him all night near the gate of the city, saying: "Let be till morning; then we will kill him." And what do you suppose Samson did? Why, as we are told, Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight and laid hold of the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and plucked them up, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders and carried them up to the top of the mountain that is before Hebron.

Fancy what the people of Gaza must have thought in the morning when they were getting ready to seize Samson and put him to death, and saw that the gates were open, and the doors of the gates were gone, and Samson with them! And they went out of their city looking for their gates, and there in the distance they saw the gates upon the mountain top.

I am sure that if Samson had gone on in the right way, and been strong in his mind as he was in his body, he would then have been able to conquer the Philistines, put them all to death and restore the Children of Israel to their ownership of the land of Canaan. One man of such enormous strength might have frightened thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of people. Think what it meant to carry off the gates of a city or to slay a thousand men with his own hand, or to face a live lion, seizing it by the jaws, and even slaying the lion. Fancy how glorious it would have been if Samson had put himself forth as a great leader like Joshua, bidding the people go back in spirit to the commands of Moses, while he led them forth to destroy the Philistines.

But the trouble was that Samson, with the strength of his body, never seems to have used it for any such great purpose. He was more inclined to amuse himself with it than to be of service with it to his fellow-Israelites. Later on we shall see how he got punished for his weakness. We cannot help feeling that Samson ought to have looked upon his strength as something which he was to use for the good of others all the while. But I shall have to tell you how by and by he came to lose it altogether.

The Philistines began now to be afraid that they would not be able to hold the country against the Israelites if this man Samson should use all his strength against themselves. But they dared not fight him, and so they thought they would try to find out wherein his strength lay. And they went about it in the same way that they had gone about to declare the riddle which Samson had put to them, you remember. They asked his wife, saying: "Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and by that means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him, and humble him; and we will give thee eleven hundred pieces of silver." Just think how mean and low it must have been for Delilah, his wife, to be willing to try and take away her husband's strength for the sake of money!

But she consented to try it. And Delilah said to

Samson: "Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth, and wherewith thou mightest be bound?"

For a time Samson thought he would amuse himself with the Philistines, seeing what they were trying to do, and knowing that they had persuaded Delilah to get his secret from him. And so he answered: "If they bind me with seven green wythes that were never dried, then shall I become weak and be as other men."

At once she went and told the Philistines what Samson had said. They were immensely pleased, thinking now they had found out how they could conquer Samson. Then the lords of the Philistines brought to her seven green wythes which had not been dried, and she bound him with them. Soon she reported her success, and she rushed in to Samson, saying: "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!"

But it was plain the Philistines were not to be as merry over it all as they thought they would be; for when they rushed in to seize him, we are told how Samson broke the wythes as a string of tow is broken when it touches the fire. So his strength was not known.

His wife did not like this at all, and she made up her mind that she would keep on trying to find out the secret. And Delilah said to Samson: "Behold, thou hast mocked me; now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound." And he said unto her: "If they only bind me with new ropes, wherewith no work has been done, then shall I become weak and as another man." So Delilah took new ropes and bound him therewith, and said unto him: "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!" This time she thought surely she had found out the secret, and that Samson would be taken. But when the Philistines rushed in, Samson broke the ropes from off his arms like a thread.

I am afraid that Samson by this time had got a little into the habit of showing off. At first, as I told you, he seemed to be a modest man; but now it looked as though he wanted everyone to see how strong he was; and so we cannot but feel a little uneasy, lest after all this showing off he might not give in and let his secret

become known to his wife. We grow a little troubled as our story goes on, and I wish it were not necessary to tell you any more.

But Delilah kept on trying to find out that secret, and she said once more: "Samson, hitherto thou hast mocked me; tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound." And he said to her: "If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web." And she fastened it with the pin, and then a little later on she rushed in, saying: "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!" And he waked out of his sleep and plucked away the pin of the beam and the web. By this time surely Samson had done enough to show how strong he was, and he ought to have stopped. Perhaps he would have done so if he had been younger and less proud of his strength. He ought to have found out long ago that he had not the same strength of mind that he had in his body, and he should have been trying to learn self-control. The one thing he ought never to have done was to make known wherein lay the secret of his strength.

But people who are proud of the strength of their arms, or of the strength of their bodies, and are quite satisfied with that kind of strength only, are sure by and by to come to grief; and Samson came to grief at last. His wife said to him again: "How canst thou say, 'I love thee,' when thy heart is not with me? Thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth."

Why it was that Samson changed his mind and at last told the secret, we shall never know. People who yield to temptation oftentimes can never understand how it all happened, because they were so sure of themselves until it was too late. But now, for some reason or other, Samson told Delilah the truth about the secret of his strength. You remember we said that when he was born it had been decided that he was to be what is called a Nazarite. Among other things the Nazarites were never to cut their hair, but to let it grow all their lives. Why they had this custom we do not know. I am just telling you the story as it is recorded on this point.

But now he said to Delilah: "There hath not come a razor upon my head, for I have been a Nazarite since I was born; if my head be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall be weak, and be like any other man."

Alas for Samson! He had given way and broken his resolution. Now the end for him was to come. It seems such an awful pity; he might have done so much with all his strength, if he had only had strength of mind at the same time!

When Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart she sent and said unto the lords of the Philistines: "Come up at once, for he has told me all his heart." Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her, and brought the money in their hands. When Samson was asleep she called for a man, and they shaved off the locks of his head, and his strength went from him.

Then she cried once more: "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!" And he awoke out of his sleep and said: "I will go out as at other times and show my strength." But he knew not that his strength was gone. It was too late! We can but pity him now.

The Philistines laid hold on him and put out his eyes. And they brought him down to Gaza, that city, you remember, where he had carried off the gates one night and left them on the top of the mountain; and they bound him with fetters of brass, and he did grind in the prison house.

You see, Samson was now a slave in the hands of the Philistines, whom he might have conquered if he had only had the right spirit and also the other kind of strength. But he had been weak in one way and strong in another, so that his strength had been of little service to him or to others. He was now blind and in prison, working as a slave, and grinding at the mill.

The Philistines were glad enough at last to have overcome Samson. They felt sure that they were safe as regards the Israelites. By this time I suppose Samson had begun to feel ashamed of what he had done. He could look back over his life and see the mistake of it all. Yet people who can see the mistakes

of their lives can never go back and begin all over again. They may try to do better for the rest of their days, but they have to take the consequences of what they have done. And the blind old Samson there in prison grinding at the mill, could only go on thinking of the past and wishing he had been another kind of man and shown the other kind of strength. We can feel pretty sure that he had begun to have a better heart now, and that he was a better man, with a nobler spirit than when he had all his strength.

You will be interested to know how he came to his end—in what way he died. The story has been told thousands of times, and you may have heard it before.

It seems that the hair of Samson's head began to grow again, and his strength was coming back, although he could never again have his eyes to see with. About this time the Philistines came together for a great festival. They were wickedly glad of the way they had conquered Samson, and they thought they had been helped in doing this by the idols which they worshiped.

You can picture to yourselves thousands of the Philistines, with their wives, it may be, assembled together to amuse themselves in the city of Gaza. I suppose there was a great palace there, and they had been eating and drinking and amusing themselves in every sort of way.

At last they thought they would have Samson brought before them and make sport of him. And they called for Samson out of the prison house, and they set him between the pillars. And Samson said unto the lad that led him by the hand: "Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereon the house resteth, that I may lean upon them."

Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, all making sport of Samson.

And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house rested and leaned upon them, the one with his right hand and the other with his left,

and Samson said: "Let me die with the Philistines." And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords and upon all the people that were therein. So that they which he slew at his death were more than those which he slew in his life.

It is sad, this story of Samson, both in the way he lived and in the way he died. He might have done so much more if he had only been another kind of man or had had the other kind of strength.

TO THE TEACHER: This might be used as a lesson on the evils of "showing off," especially when one can only do it with brute strength instead of showing strength of mind. It may be pointed out how a person is liable to give way suddenly owing to his pride in his one kind of strength and to his want of force of character. If Sampson is made a hero of, the value of the story is lost entirely. He did some good, but not for the sake of good, and therefore not one-quarter of the good he might have done. Yet the story is classic and needs to be told, even with its details.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Jephthah's Daughter.

I can tell you now another kind of story, quite unlike the one about Samson. It belongs to the same time in the history of the Children of Israel, in those days when they were without one common form of government, as I said, and when they were every now and then having wars with the Canaanites. There is one sad remark which we find made over and over again at that time in regard to the Children of Israel. If you read their history you will see now and then how it says, "And the Children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of their Lord."

And whenever you come upon this saying you can know that it is followed by an account of the way the Israelites suffered at the hands of the tribes of wicked people living there in Canaan. Sometimes it would be the Philistines, as in the story of Samson; at other times it would be some other wicked tribe afflicting the Children of Israel. And when this took place there would have to be war, as you know, so that one or another leader would arise to help the Israelites in their battles.

At one of those times a leader arose whose name was Jephthah, and he was said to be a mighty man of valor. Just at the time when he was growing up to young manhood the Children of Israel were having a great deal of trouble with the Ammonites, one of those wicked tribes who were the enemies of the Israelites.

Already Jephthah as a young man had been showing great strength and bravery, so that the Israelites felt they might look upon him as a leader.

And they sent for him, saying: "Come and be our

chief, that we may fight with the children of Ammon." It was mainly the elders of Gilead who had sent to Jephthah in this way. And Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead: "If ye bring me to fight with the children of Ammon, and the Lord deliver them before me, shall I be your head?" And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah: "The Lord shall be witness between us; surely according to thy word, so we will do." Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead and the people made him head and chief over them.

I am not telling you this story so much in order that you may know about Jephthah, but in order that you may know about his daughter, a beautiful girl, brave and good and strong, whom you may want to hear about.

Jephthah made ready his army, feeling sure that he would be able with his soldiers to conquer the Ammonites. But he did one thing which nowadays we cannot at all well understand. In former times, a long while ago, people had a way of making vows, thinking that making such vows would help them to be successful in what they were trying to do. And Jephthah, wishing to assure himself about his success in fighting with the Ammonites, made one of these vows, which was something he ought not to have done, because it was the wrong kind of vow, although, as we might say, it was made in the right spirit.

His thought was, if he promised to give up something very dear to him—perhaps the dearest thing in the world—then the Ruler of the World would be on his side and help him all the more.

And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, saying: "If thou wilt indeed deliver the children of Ammon into my hand, then whatsoever cometh forth from the doors of my house to meet me when I return, it shall be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering."

Nevertheless he must have known that this would have been some one of his own family, and it meant a promise that he would put that one to death if he should win the victory, in order to show his willing-

ness to give up something very dear to him. But we feel he had no right to do this with the life of another person. Human life is something sacred, and no one has the right to sacrifice a human being in that way.

But be that as it may, he set out with his army and won a great victory over the Ammonites.

So the Children of Ammon were subdued before the Children of Israel.

Jephthah came back, rejoicing in his victory. I fancy he may have forgotten all about the vow he had made, although this seems hardly possible. While he was thinking only of the success he had met with, and how glad all the elders of Gilead would be when he returned with the army, all of a sudden he was made to remember that sad vow. Who do you suppose was the one that came forth to meet him out of his house? Why, it was his own daughter—his only child. She had already heard of the success of her father, and of the great victory he had won, and she came out to meet him, singing and dancing to show her pleasure, and to let him feel her delight over what he had done. Surely this was natural enough, just the way any child would have done, any son or daughter, when their father had done something brave in this way.

As we are told, Jephthah came unto his house, and behold! his daughter came out to meet him, with timbrels and with dancing; and she was an only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter. And it came to pass when he saw her that he rent his clothes and said: "Alas, my daughter, thou hast brought me very low; for I have made my vow and cannot take it back."

And he told her of the vow he had made before he had set out to conquer the Ammonites. Just think what a meeting that was between father and child! His heart must have been torn in pieces. How he must have wished that he had never made that vow, as he looked into the eye of his only child, his daughter there before him!

There was no way out of it, however, according to the customs of those days. When a man made a vow it had to be kept, no matter what it might be.

And what do you suppose this daughter did when she was told of this vow on the part of her father? Did she plead with him that he should spare her life, as indeed we might have expected of her; or, instead of pleading with him, did she try to escape, fleeing from her home or her country, and in that way saving her life? Surely she did not want to die; and it must have seemed hard indeed that she should have been asked to give up her life in order that the vow of her father might be carried out.

But no; this was a brave girl, with no thought about herself. She loved her father, even to the point of being willing to give up her life for his sake. She knew what an awful thing it would be for him to break that vow, now that it had been made. She felt that somehow a curse would come upon him unless she consented to die.

And this is what the daughter said to her father: "My father, thou hast opened thy mouth, and made thy vow; do unto me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; inasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thy enemies, even of the children of Ammon." You see, there had been no pleading, no tears, no anger on the part of that brave girl; she stood there before her father, loyal to him in life and in death.

Only one favor she asked of her father, saying: "Let this thing be done for me; let me alone two months, that I may depart and go down upon the mountain and stay there for a time with my companions." And he said, "Go." And he sent her away for two months. And she departed, she and her companions, and staid alone with them two months upon the mountains.

One cannot help thinking of her there with her companions during that time, and what a heroine she was, how calm and how self-possessed and how fearless! She knew what it was to love her father. We know well enough that she wanted to live, for she was young and had scarcely entered upon what we would call real life. She must have been thinking to herself how she might have married and had children, with little ones

to call her mother. And none of this could ever be; she would never be a mother nor a wife, but must give up all thought of that, in order to enable her father to keep his vow.

However, she never once changed her mind during those two months while she was there on the mountains. And it came to pass at the end of two months she returned unto her father, who did with her according to the vow which he had vowed.

This is the sad yet beautiful story of Jephthah's Daughter.

TO THE TEACHER: The beauty and significance of this story lies in the character of the daughter and not in the heroism of Jephthah. One can speak of the noble loyalty on her part toward her father and of the sweet spirit of resignation displayed by her. The fact that Jephthah had to keep his vow must be spoken of as something pertaining to those days, and not as if nowadays such a vow ought to be kept. Dwell on the mistake of making rash vows or promises. Something could be said of the repeated saying about the Children of Israel "doing evil again in the sight of the Lord." There is a great lesson in history here, indicating that the struggle to keep on the good side must always be a battle and always be kept up, in that it does not come easy to stay good.

MEMORY VERSES: *Alas, my daughter, thou hast brought me very low, for I have made my vow and cannot take it back!*

My father, thou hast opened thy mouth and made thy vow; do unto me according to that which has proceeded out of thy mouth.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The Story of Ruth.

We are still talking about that time when the Children of Israel had no one common form of government; each tribe governing itself in its own way. I suppose whole books could be written about what happened to the Israelites in those days. And out of all that might be told you, I am choosing certain of these stories.

Now I have another one that I am sure you will care to hear. It is connected with the tribe of Judah. Whether it belongs to a time before or after the days of Jephthah we do not know. But I should like to give you this story in order that you may see how the Israelites found out that there were other good people in the world besides themselves. And this story has to do with a noble-minded woman, as true and good in her way as any of the women among the Children of Israel.

It seems that in those days there was a very severe famine in one part of Canaan, so that the people in the tribe of Judah suffered from lack of food. And when famine strikes a people it is usually the poor man, or the poor man's family, that suffers first, because they have very little laid by for a rainy day.

And so my story begins in this way: It came to pass that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of the tribe of Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.

The Moab people were like the Canaanites, although they did not live in the land of Canaan, but in one of the countries round about there. The people who lived in that land and those who lived round about, were pretty much all of them of the same kind, and

not many of them were good people. I shall speak of them all, however, as "Canaanites."

But there was this family among the Moabites, although they belonged to the Children of Israel and of the tribe of Judah. They found food there, and so remained among the Moabites for a number of years. I do not fancy that they were very happy, however, and probably they got to wishing that they might go back to their own people.

In the meantime the two sons married wives among the Moabites. This was contrary to the custom, yet it is with one of these Moabitish women that my story is concerned.

Evidently the two sons were very fortunate in their wives, and it turned out that these two women were not like the rest of the wicked Canaanites. The name of the one was Orpah, the name of the other Ruth, while the mother of the two sons was named Naomi.

After the two sons had been married a few years they both died, and the father died also; and there was the poor woman without her sons, and without her husband, alone in a strange country, with the two Moabitish women, Orpah and Ruth.

It was now about ten years since Naomi and her husband had left their home and gone away from the tribe of Judah to the land of the Moabites. In the meantime Naomi had learned that there was food to be had once more in her own country and among her own people. And so she decided that she would go back there, returning to her home and to her kindred. She was a sorrowful woman after all the trials that had come upon her, but she had learned to love these two women, her daughters-in-law, the wives of her sons. And she felt that she ought not to ask them to go with her, inasmuch as she would be taking them among strangers, in the way she had been a stranger in the land of Moab.

One cannot help feeling a great deal of pity for these three lonely women, bereft of those nearest and dearest to them. But Naomi wanted to do what was right with those who had been the wives of her dear sons.

And now, when she had made up her mind that she would go back to her own people, she said to Orpah and Ruth: "Go, return, each of you, to her mother's house; may the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead and with me." Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.

And they said to her: "Nay, but we will return with thee unto thy people." This was certainly brave and loyal on their part. But Naomi answered: "Turn back, my daughters; why will ye go with me? Go your way." And they lifted up their voices and wept again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, bade her goodbye and went back to her people.

Not so with Ruth. And it is with this noble woman that my story deals. As we are told, she clave to Naomi, and this is what she said: "Entreat me not to leave thee and to return from following after thee, for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy Lord my Lord; where thou diest, will I die; and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part me and thee!"

I wonder if you would not like to learn those words by heart, they are so beautiful. Don't you suppose that Naomi must have felt for a moment as though this was enough to make up for nearly all the trials that she had to go through? When addressed in this way, Naomi could not refuse. She, too, wanted Ruth to stay with her, and when she saw that the young woman was disposed to go with her, she left off speaking. And they started out to go to Naomi's people, among the tribe of Judah.

You see, it had been ten whole years since Naomi had gone away. But the people in the city where she had lived remembered her well, for they had been very fond of her indeed.

And when she came back with Ruth all the city was moved about them, and the women said, "Is this Naomi?" and she answered them: "Call me not Naomi (which in her language meant 'pleasant'), but call me Mara (which in her language meant 'bit-

ter'), for all hath gone bitterly with me. I went out full, and am come home again empty." One feels almost sorry that she spoke in this way when one thinks how Ruth had clung to her, and what it meant for Naomi to have a daughter like this, who would leave her own people to come with Naomi, just for the sake of her love for her husband's mother. But, as we are told, Naomi returned, and Ruth, the Moabitess, her daughter, with her. They had come to the city in the beginning of the barley harvest.

Now, they were very poor, as you may be aware. There was food enough in the land, but as yet they had none of it. At one time, long before she had gone away, her husband had owned a field in this land, and she may have hoped to get it back again, while as yet she had to take what she could find.

In those days they had a beautiful custom, according to which, when the men were reaping in the harvest from their fields of wheat or barley, they were to leave the corners of the fields for the poor to glean in; or if any of the wheat or barley dropped by the side, as it was being gathered in bundles, that was to be left there for the same purpose.

The only course left now for Ruth and Naomi was to glean in the fields in this way. So Ruth, the Moabitess, said to Naomi: "Let me now go to the field and glean among the ears of corn."

It so happened that the field where she was gleaning belonged to a man named Boaz, a mighty man of wealth, who had been a kinsman of the husband of Naomi. As we are told in our story, "Ruth went and came and gleaned in the field after the reapers, and her hap was to light on the portion of the field belonging to Boaz. And behold, Boaz came among the reapers and said to them, 'The Lord be with you,' and they answered him, 'The Lord bless thee.'"

Then Boaz said unto his servant that was set over the reapers, "Whose damsel is this?" pointing to Ruth not far away. I fancy there must have been something fine and noble in the appearance of this brave young

woman. In some way she must have attracted the attention of Boaz while she was gleaning there.

And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said: "It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab; and she said, 'Let me glean, I pray you, and gather after the reapers among the sheaves;' so she came and hath continued from the morning."

Boaz then said to Ruth: "Hearest thou not, my daughter; go not to glean in another field, neither pass from hence; but abide here fast by my maidens; let thine eyes be on the field where they do reap, and go thou after them. I have charged the young men that they should not touch thee. And when thou art athirst go unto the vessels and drink from the water which my men have drawn."

How glad at heart poor Ruth must have felt that all this kindness should have come to her, a stranger in the land! It means so much sometimes if one is a stranger, to have a few kind words spoken to one in this way. From that time on, all the world seemed different to her; the sky looked brighter; everybody seemed kind all around her.

As we are told, Ruth fell on her face and bowed herself to the ground and said to Boaz: "Why have I found grace in thy sight, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?" And Boaz answered and said to her: "It hath been fully shown to me all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thy husband, and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. May the Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord, under whose wings thou art come to take refuge."

And Ruth answered him and said: "Let me find grace in thy sight, my lord, for thou hast comforted me, in that thou hast spoken kindly unto thine handmaid, though I be not as one of thy handmaidens."

At meal time Boaz said unto her: "Come hither and eat of the bread and dip thy morsel in the vinegar

with the rest." And she sat beside the reapers, and they gave her corn, and she did eat.

When she was risen up to glean again, Boaz commanded his young men, saying: "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and also pull out some for her from the bundles, and drop it by the way and let her find it." In this way Ruth gleaned in the field until evening time, and she took up what she had gleaned and went into the city. And her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned and said to her: "Where hast thou gleaned to-day? Blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee."

Ruth then told her mother-in-law where she had gleaned and said: "The man's name in whose field I gleaned to-day is Boaz." And Naomi said to Ruth: "The man is nigh of kin unto us, one of our near kindred." And Ruth, the Moabitess, said: "Yes; he said to me: 'Thou shalt keep fast by my men until they have ended the harvest.'" And Naomi said unto Ruth: "It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with the handmaidens of Boaz and stay with them in that field." So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz, and gleaned to the end of the barley harvest and of the wheat harvest. And she dwelt with her mother-in-law, Naomi.

In the meantime Naomi began to think about that field which once had belonged to her husband, and whether it might not be somehow got back again for herself and Ruth—that is, "redeemed," as they called it in those days. If this could only be done, there would be something left for the two women to live upon the rest of their lives. She decided to send Ruth to Boaz and see whether he would redeem the field in order that they might have it back again.

And Ruth came to Boaz and he said, "Who art thou?" and she answered, "I am Ruth, thy handmaid. Thou art our near kinsman." Just why Boaz had not known this, our story does not say. But at any rate, as soon as the fact was made known to him about the kinship between him and Naomi, and about the field which Naomi wished to have redeemed, he answered Ruth, saying: "My daughter, fear not; I will do to

thee all that thou sayest. It is true that I am a near kinsman; howbeit, there is a kinsman nearer than I. Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman and redeem the field, well and good; let him do the kinsman's part. But if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman."

And he said to her the next morning: "Bring the mantle that is upon thee and hold it;" and she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley and gave it to her; and he went into the city. Then Ruth came back to Naomi and told all that the man had said and done; and she said: "These six measures of barley gave he to me, for he said, 'Go not empty to thy mother-in-law.'" And Naomi answered: "Sit still, my daughter, until thou knowest how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he hath finished this thing this day."

You will be glad to know now what was done by Boaz. You see, he had been very much pleased with Ruth because of the sweetness and beauty of her character; and then, too, he was glad to know of his kinship with Naomi. He had gone at once to the gate of the city in the early morning, and sat down there.

Then, as we learn, behold, the near kinsman of whom Boaz spoke, came by, and Boaz said to him: "Turn aside, sit down here." And the man turned aside and sat down. And he said to the near kinsman: "Naomi that is come again out of the country of Moab, hath a parcel of land which belonged to her husband, and which should be redeemed. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it; but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me that I may know, for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee."

After they had talked it over for a while it turned out that the other kinsman could not redeem the land, and so he gave the right to redeem it to Boaz.

You may like to know of a peculiar custom of those early times, when people agreed on something. As we are told in our story: "It was the custom at that time

in Israel, when confirming an agreement, for the one man to draw off a shoe and give it to the other; and so the near kinsman said unto Boaz: "Redeem thou the field." And he drew off his shoe.

Then Boaz said to those who were present at the gate of the city: "Ye are witnesses this day that I have redeemed the field that belonged to the husband of Naomi." But this was not all. He was going to do something more. He had been so pleased with Ruth, so charmed by her beauty and her noble ways, that he had decided to make her his wife. And he said, therefore, at the same time to the elders at the gate: "Ruth, the Moabitess, I take to be my wife. Ye are witnesses this day." And all the people that were at the gate and the elders said: "We are witnesses."

And in this way joy at last had come to Naomi and her daughter-in-law, Ruth. Their trials were at an end. I am sure Naomi would no longer have asked that people should have called her "Mara," after all the kindness and good fortune which had come to her and to the dear daughter that had followed her from the land of the Moabites.

Ruth was now married to Boaz, and no longer had to glean in the field as one of his handmaidens, but became his wife. And I am sure that Naomi, the dear mother, lived with them in their home, and that if ever there was a happy home, it must have been that of Ruth, Naomi and Boaz.

TO THE TEACHER: This is one of the most beautiful and touching stories in the Bible, and should be gone over very fully, with each detail talked about, so that the children may remember it all. A number of the speeches could be recited aloud and committed to memory by all the young people. It is not necessary to condemn the first daughter-in-law who stayed behind. The fact that Ruth followed Naomi is not the main point, but rather the gentle and beautiful spirit Ruth displayed throughout, indicating what a fine, strong, noble character she had, and how brave and gentle she was, under difficulties or trying circumstances. Show a

picture of gleaners in a wheatfield. Something might be said of the importance of the discovery on the part of Naomi and of the Israelites that a good and noble person might be found among a class of people generally despised.

MEMORY VERSE: *Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy Lord my Lord; where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me*

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The Patience of Job.

I wonder if at any time you have ever heard anybody speak of another person, and say that he had "the patience of Job"? If not, it is quite certain that you will hear this a good many times later on, even before you are grown up. When people wish to tell about some one who has had unusual patience, they always mention the name of Job. This man must have been a great character in history, or the story of him must be quite unlike the stories of ordinary men; otherwise everybody would not use his name as *the* example of patience.

Perhaps I had better at this time, therefore, tell you about Job. Just when he lived, we do not know. It may be that it was somewhere about the time of Ruth and Naomi, or of Jephthah, or of Samson—while the Children of Israel had no kings, as I have said a number of times. But it does not matter when he lived; all that we care to find out is what sort of man he was, what he did, or what he had to go through, because people when talking about wonderful patience always use this man's name.

According to the story, he was a man of great wealth, having riches of all kinds; all the money he wanted, and everything that his heart could desire. Few men at that day were as rich as Job. Everything went prosperously with him; nothing seemed to go wrong or interfere with him in any way. His children were all well and good and happy; and he had a beautiful home, where there was no trouble of any kind.

All this does not happen often in the world; but it was so with the whole family of Job.

What is more, Job was a very good man. We might have supposed that this wealth and prosperity would have spoiled him a little; because when people are very successful and never have any kind of trouble, they often grow selfish or disagreeable, so that other people do not like them, or will have nothing to do with them. But not so with this man with whom my story deals; in spite of all his riches and prosperity, he was a man good and true.

My story begins in this way: There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared the Lord, and kept away from evil. And there was born unto him seven sons and three daughters.

Now perhaps you would like to know how rich he was, or what kind of wealth he had. I can even tell you just what he possessed, and you can count it up if you like. His substance was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses; so that this man was the greatest of all the children of the East.

It seems that his sons and daughters were all prosperous along with Job. They, too, had happy and beautiful homes, and great wealth, and all that they could desire. Furthermore they had a very pretty custom, which I am sure you will be pleased to know about, by way of celebrating each other's birthdays. So that when a birthday of one of the sons came around, all of the other sons and daughters would gather in his house and have a feast with him.

I suppose you already begin to think that my story has opened too prosperously, and that something is going to happen before long. And you are right in what you are thinking of;—something did happen.

According to my story, we are told how the great Tempter came one day to the Lord, and the Lord asked him: "Whence comest thou?" And he answered: "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." And the Lord

said to the Tempter: "Hast thou thought of my servant Job? Surely there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man."

Then the Tempter answered and said: "Doth Job serve for nought? Hast thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land; but put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will renounce thee to thy face."

Now the Lord thought it might be well to find out whether this was true, or at least to put Job to the test. It was a fact, as the Tempter had said, that Job had had no troubles of any kind, or nothing which might lead him to evil. The Great Ruler knew only too well how often it happened that men and women who seemed very strong when nothing went against them, would yet show themselves very weak in the presence of a great temptation. He thought now that it was but fair for Job to have some trials, in order that the man might show his real character. And so he said to the Tempter: "Behold all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put forth not thine hand."

We cannot help feeling just a least bit uneasy about the man Job. It is always very sad and painful when a man whom we have trusted, and looked upon as good and true, shows himself in another light according as circumstances change. And we shall be very unhappy if it turns out this way with Job. But I must tell you the story as it stands, no matter how it turns out. So I go on with my tale.

It fell on a day when the sons and daughters of Job were eating and drinking in their eldest brother's house—keeping his birthday, we assume—that there came a messenger unto Job and said: "The oxen were plowing and the asses feeding beside them, and an enemy fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alive to tell thee."

I should much like to have seen the face of Job

just at that moment. It was the first time in his life that trouble had come to him; and I should like to know how he looked, whether he turned pale, or whether he wore just the same face as before.

But while the man was yet speaking, there came also another and said: "Fire is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them, and I only have escaped alive to tell thee."

Once more I should much like to have looked at the face of Job, for we keep wondering whether he was yet calm, in spite of what was being told to him. Few men would have been able to control themselves at such a time.

But while the second man was yet speaking, there came also another man and said: "Some bands of men have fallen on the camels and taken them away; yea and have slain the servants with the edge of the sword, and I only have escaped alive to tell thee."

How do you suppose Job looked now? What sort of a face did he have by this time, would you say? All his property seems to have been destroyed or taken away from him. Yet worse was to come.

While the third man was yet speaking, there came also another and said: "Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking in their eldest brother's house, and behold there came a great wind and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon them all, and they are dead, and I only am escaped alive to tell thee."

It must be owned that just then I should not have cared to look upon the face of Job. When sorrow strikes a man, we feel such pity it almost overcomes us ourselves. No, I should have wanted for a little while to turn my eyes away, because we know that now the face of Job would have lost its calm, if calm had been there before.

Almost any man would have given way after all these blows, and been ready to curse or to die. Job might have stood up against the loss of all his wealth, but where were all his sons and daughters, his dear

children to whom he had hoped to give all he possessed?

And what do you suppose Job said? Why, he rent his mantle in twain, and bowed down solemnly, and spoke these words: "Naked was I born, and naked shall I die; the Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Surely you would say this man had stood the test, and that even the Tempter would have felt that nothing could be done to overcome the patience of Job. But no, the Tempter came to the Great Ruler, the Lord, and the Lord said to him: "Whence comest thou?" And the Tempter answered as before: "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." And the Lord said to the Tempter: "Hast thou considered my servant Job. Surely there is none like him on the earth; a perfect and an upright man; he still holdeth fast his integrity, in spite of what thou hast done to him." And the Tempter answered and said: "Yes, but all a man hath will he give for his life; put forth thine hand now and touch his bones and his flesh, and he will renounce thee to thy face."

It seemed best to the Great Ruler to put Job through the whole of the trial, although he surely must have felt that the man had had enough to endure already. But he answered the Tempter: "Behold he is in thy hand; only spare his life."

Alas for Job! There he was, with all his wealth gone, with his sons and daughters dead, desolate in his home; and now he had still more to endure. For the Tempter smote Job with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto the crown of his head. Then Job took a potsherd to scrape himself withal, and he went and sat among the ashes. Surely we should have felt some pity or mercy now, if Job had lost his patience and used some bad words. It is hard enough for a man even in good health to show himself brave and strong under calamity, but when he is ill not only in mind but in body, it is still worse.

There lay Job in the ashes, in sore pain, and nothing

left to cheer his heart, save the memories of the past. Then his wife came to him. She did not have the same patience. She had seen all that her husband had to suffer, and she said to him: "Curse the Lord, and die." A good many persons would have talked in that way I suppose. But it was now plain that Job was the same man in adversity that he had been in prosperity. You remember the answer he gave when all his sons and daughters had died; and he gave the same answer now to his wife: "Thou speakest as one of the foolish speaketh. What! shall we receive good, and shall we not be ready at the same time to receive evil?"

It was the same reply, you see: The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

Then one other sad affliction fell upon Job. Three men came to him, who had been his friends in his time of prosperity. Probably they meant well. But they sat around the poor man giving him advice, and telling him how they would act if they had been obliged to suffer all this. They went on talking to Job in a way that would wear out any other man's patience. Sometimes you will hear of persons giving advice to people in trouble, and being spoken of as "Job's comforters."

They had a long, long talk together, although I need not tell you any more about it. It was a talk about how human beings have to suffer; what trials they have to undergo. Job would have been happier a good deal if these comforters had staid away, because they gave advice rather than sympathy and love.

But the main point had been settled, and the Great Ruler was more than pleased. One man had shown that he could be as strong and brave and true under adversity, as he had been under prosperity.

And so, ere long, the trials of Job were removed. Of course he could not have his children back again; but wealth was restored to him in abundance, much more than he ever had before. Now, he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thou-

sand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. Then, too, he had other sons and daughters. All his sickness was taken away from him, so that in so far as it was possible for a man under those circumstances to be happy again, Job was happy once more; and as we are told, in all the land there were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job. After this Job lived a long while, and at last died, being old and full of days. And I think what will always come to our minds when speaking of this man, will be the words: "The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

TO THE TEACHER: The story of Job is well worthy of careful study. While in the complete form it is subtle and full of "problems," yet the story can stand by itself with its sublime lesson of obedience. Some reference might be made to the earlier kind of "test" mentioned in these lessons. Ask the children who it was that was put to such a test, and have a little review of what Abraham had to go through, and what a spirit of obedience and gentle submission he displayed. The details of the experiences of Job should be talked over because of their classic significance. Even the language and speeches in the various parts have become historical as woven into the everyday talk of average men and women.

Memory verse: *Naked was I born and naked shall I die; the Lord gave and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord.*

PART V.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The Boy Samuel.

We must take up once more the story of the Children of Israel there in Canaan. We cannot say just how many hundreds of years went by during the time when they had no kings and each tribe governed itself in its own way. For a time all would go well with the people, but then again they would have trouble when the Canaanites would make war upon them, conquer some of their cities and rule over them. The great trouble was, as I have told you, that they would not hold together or work together as one people; they would fall into bad habits, take up the ways of the wicked Canaanites, and show themselves selfish and thoughtless. We might have hoped that after the death of Joshua, when they had been so successful in their wars with the Canaanites, that they would have held together like one great family, so that there would be no need of any other kind of government.

But now I come to a new effort, as we shall call it, in their history, when they formed a kingdom and began to have kings to rule over them. This was a great change; for not in their whole history since the time when Abraham had gone from the land of the Chaldees and come over here to Canaan, had there ever been any kings in Israel.

You must learn how it all came about, this great change. It had some good in it, but also a great deal of evil. It was not going to be the best kind

of government; but, at any rate, it would be better than what they were having as long as they would not hold together, and were being ruled over by the wicked Canaanites.

We first begin by letting you know about the boy Samuel. There was a certain man whose name was Elkanah, and his wife's name was Hannah. According to my story, Hannah was very unhappy because she had no children.

Elkanah was sorry, of course, and tried very hard to make his wife Hannah happy in spite of her disappointment, for he loved his wife. Every now and then, however, he would find her in tears, and he would say to her: "Hannah, why weepest thou, and why eatest thou not? And why is thy heart grieved? Am I not better to thee than many sons?" I know this reply must have pleased Hannah very much, and eased her heart of her sorrow.

But still she wanted a child, and she made up her mind that if a son came to her, she would devote him to the Lord, and not keep him for herself. She vowed that the boy should serve in the place where the people had their altar and made their offerings to the Great Ruler.

At last, I am glad to say, the great joy came to them both; a little son was born to them, and then Hannah told her husband of the vow she had made. He was quite willing to help her carry it out, and they took the child up to the place of worship and gave it over to Eli the priest who ministered there.

The boy's name was Samuel. We shall have to talk further about him, because it was through him that the Children of Israel later on received their first king. But at the start I must tell you about the priest who had charge of Samuel, and whose name was Eli. I am sorry to say that Eli had two sons who were bad men. They lived there with the priest, their father, but were guilty of all manner of wickedness. Now Eli ought to have rebuked or punished them; but for some reason he had not the heart to do it, and the boys grew worse and worse.

In the meantime, the child Samuel who had been only a babe in his mother's arms when taken to Eli, was growing older, so that he began to talk and to think for himself, and to help Eli by many little services. Every year his mother made a little coat, and brought it up to him when she came with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice to the Lord.

But one night something strange happened to the boy Samuel. It came to pass when Eli was laid down to sleep, and the lamp was not yet gone out, and Samuel also was laid down to sleep, that a voice spoke the boy's name, saying: "Samuel." And the boy answered, "Here am I."

Then Samuel ran unto Eli, and said, "Here I am; for thou callest me." But Eli said, "I called thee not, lie down again." And the boy went and laid down.

Once more the voice was heard as it called, saying: "Samuel." And Samuel rose and went to Eli, and said again, "Here am I, for thou calledst me." And Eli said once more, "I called thee not, my son; lie down again."

Samuel did not know what to make of this; but the little boy was obedient in every way, and not at all troubled or afraid, and he went back and laid himself down to sleep. Then once more the voice came to him a third time, and said to him: "Samuel," and the boy arose and went to Eli the third time, and said: "Here am I, for thou calledst me." Eli now thought it must have been the Ruler of the World who was talking to Samuel, and he said to the boy, "If the voice calleth thee, thou shalt say, Speak, for thy servant heareth."

Samuel accordingly laid down in his place, until the voice came again, saying: "Samuel, Samuel," and the boy answered quietly, "Speak, for thy servant heareth."

And the voice said: "Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of everyone that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from

the beginning even unto the end, for I have told him that I will judge his house forever because of the iniquity which he knew in the wicked conduct of his sons and in that he did not restrain them."

We know that Samuel could not have understood quite what all this meant; for as yet he was only a child, and he had no knowledge of all the wickedness in the world. But he could see that it meant somehow that trouble was going to come to his dear priest Eli, whom he loved and served. It made him very unhappy therefore while he lay quietly waiting until the morning. He hated very much indeed to tell Eli anything about it, and hoped that Eli would not ask him; yet if he were questioned he was going to tell the truth, for there was nothing else for him to do.

Surely enough, Eli met him in the morning, and said: "Samuel, my son." And the boy answered, "Here am I." And Eli said: "What is it that was said to thee last night. I pray thee hide it not from me." And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. Then Eli said: "Let the Lord do what seemeth good."

You see, Eli meant well; he had been good in his way, only he had been weak. He was one of those persons who would never do anybody any harm, always be gentle and kind; but when it came to stepping forward and acting in a positive way by showing courage, he would probably fail. He ought to have punished his sons, and restrained them from doing all that wickedness; but he had not been strong enough. And so it was that a terrible punishment came upon him afterwards, although we need not stop to dwell upon it here.

In the meantime, I am happy to say that Samuel the boy went on growing into youth, and young manhood, brave and good and true in every way that we can think of. People who came to the place of worship to bring their sacrifices or offerings, were always pleased with him, and went back home telling their neighbors and friends how they liked Samuel. What is more, he began to show himself wise in many ways,

until by the time he was a young man he was talked of, all over Canaan, wherever the Children of Israel lived. The people began now to feel that they would have a great teacher in Samuel, a man of wisdom, to whom they could go for advice in all sorts of ways. They called him a "seer" or a "prophet," because that was the name they gave to their great teachers. This word prophet I should advise you to remember, because some of the greatest teachers in the world are spoken of nowadays as the prophets of Israel—as the wise men who appeared in Canaan after the time of Samuel.

TO THE TEACHER: Touch upon the gentle obedience of Samuel and upon his truthfulness. Dwell on the spirit of trust he displayed before his elders. Then point out his straightforward honesty. The name of Samuel's father and mother should be remembered. The incident concerning Eli and his sons might be passed over without much comment, using it rather as a means of illustrating the character of the boy Samuel.

MEMORY VERSES:

Here am I, for thou calledst me.

Let the Lord do what seemeth good.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

The Call of the Israelites for a King.

Now that the Children of Israel had a great teacher in Samuel, they began to feel more encouraged about their future in the land of Canaan. For a long while they had had no such a leader. He was known everywhere among the Israelites, and they made him a kind of judge, so that whenever they had any kind of trouble they would come to him and get him to settle it. He must have been very wise to have pleased the people in this way, and a new kind of feeling began to show itself among the Israelites. They talked more about themselves as one great family, and began to hold together more, instead of each tribe staying by itself and doing what it pleased. In this way they were showing more courage in fighting the wicked Canaanites, and began to have a little more freedom, although they were still ruled over for the most part by those people, especially by the tribe called "Philistines."

At last Samuel came to be an old man, and the people saw that before many years he would no longer be with them. And they were very much troubled over this. They were afraid that they would lose what they had gained, because they would be without a leader or a teacher. On the other hand, they noticed how all the other tribes of people around them had kings to rule over them; and somehow they thought that if they could only have a king like those other tribes, they would be much more prosperous, as they would say, and be able to throw off the yoke of the Philistines.

Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves

together, and came to Samuel, and they said unto him: "Behold thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the other nations." This troubled Samuel very much. He felt it would be so much better if only the Children of Israel would hold together like one great family, and not try to have one ruler, or governor, as was usual among the wicked Canaanites. But he talked to the Lord over All about it, and it seemed best to let the people have their way. The Great Ruler knew that they would be sorry about it in one manner, if glad about it in another. And he said to Samuel: "Hearken unto their voice; howbeit, thou shalt protest solemnly unto them, and show them what it will mean for them to have a king to reign over them."

Perhaps it would interest you a good deal if I let you know what Samuel said to this people, and in what way he described how it would be to them if they had a king. He was of course not speaking of any special man or king, but of the habits and customs of the people who had kings to rule over them. And Samuel said to the people: "This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you; he will take your sons and appoint them unto him for his chariots and to be his horsemen; and they shall run before his chariots; and he will appoint them unto him for captains of thousands, and captains of fifties; and he will set some to plough the ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and the instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be cooks and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take your manservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and put them to his work. And ye shall cry out in that day, because of your king which ye shall have chosen."

One would suppose that this would have been enough to discourage the people from wanting to have a king. It was a dark picture, surely. It meant really

making themselves slaves to one man. But few people are able to look far ahead and see the good and evil that may happen; if they want a thing very much, and they get it, they will be sure to believe that somehow or other it will come out all right, and they will not give any ear to the warnings. People permit themselves to believe almost anything they like, if they want anything very much; and that was the way at the present time with the Children of Israel. Instead of listening to Samuel or paying any attention to what he said, they acted as if they had not heard a word of it all.

They only kept on saying: "Nay, but we will have a king over us; that we may be also like all the nations, and that our king may go before us and fight our battles." You see, that was what they were thinking of, fighting. And in this they were right, for it was high time that they should do some fighting, and they ought to have done it long before. And Samuel answered them therefore: "Enough, go ye every man unto his city."

There was only one thing to be done—they must have a king, even if they had to take the consequences. Samuel knew that at least some good would come of it, because if they had a king who was brave, they might show more courage and begin to fight with the Philistines, so as to be able to get possession of the land once more.

It rested now with Samuel to find a king for the Children of Israel. This was no easy matter, because people suitable to become kings and govern in the right way, cannot be found everywhere, and Samuel knew that even the best man he could find would not be a perfect king. But he was going to try and serve the Children of Israel as well as he knew how. Then, too, he felt that the Lord over All would guide him in making the choice.

I will tell you now what took place, and in what way Samuel found a man to become king over Israel. It is quite an interesting story at the outset, and I am sure you will be glad to hear it.

Now there was a man of the tribe of Benjamin, a mighty man of valor, who had a son, and this son's name was Saul, a young man and a good man. As we are told, there was not among the Children of Israel a goodlier person than he; from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people. Plainly, therefore, Saul must have been a very tall young man.

It so happened that the asses of Saul's father were lost. What was the cause of this I do not know. They may have wandered away when Saul's father was not thinking about it. But he said to his son: "Take now one of the servants with you, and arise, go seek the asses."

And Saul did as he was told, and went from one country to another, but could not find the asses. At last he thought it best to give up the search, supposing that his father would grow anxious about him. He said therefore to his servant, "Let us return, lest my father leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us." And the servant said to Saul: "Behold now there is in this city a seer, and he is a man that is held in high honor; let us go thither; perhaps he can tell us concerning our journey whereon we go."

Then Saul said to his servant: "Well said; come, let us go." So they went up to the city where Samuel was. As they went up the ascent to the city they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said to them: "Is the seer here?" and they answered them and said, "He is; make haste now for he is come today into the city; as soon as ye be come into the city, ye shall straightway find him."

In the meantime, the Great Ruler had told Samuel the day before, saying: "Tomorrow about this time a man out of the tribe of Benjamin shall come to thee, and thou shalt anoint him to be the prince over Israel."

And so when Samuel met Saul the next day at once he knew that this was the man whom he was to anoint and make king over the Israelites. And as Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate he said: "Tell

me, I pray thee, where is the seer's house?" And Samuel answered and said: "I am the seer; ye shall eat with me to-day; and in the morning I will let thee go, and I will tell thee all that is in thy heart. And as for thy asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them, for they are found."

All this surprised Saul very much, as he did not know what great destiny was to befall him. It puzzled him that the seer should speak to him in such a way, as if he, Saul, were a very important man. And he said to Samuel: "Am I not of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe; wherefore speakest thou to me after this manner?"

But Samuel took him and his servant and brought them to his house and gave them the chief place at the table. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day; and then they had a talk together on the housetop. This custom will interest you, for in that part of the world the houses are often very low, and in the cool of the day the people evidently go up on the tops of their houses and talk together. Just what they said, Samuel and Saul together, I do not know; but we suppose it was told to Saul how he was to be chosen king over the Israelites. The next morning Samuel called to him: "Up, that I may send thee away." And Saul arose and they went out, both of them, he and Samuel. As he was going down at the end of the city Samuel said to Saul: "Bid thy servant pass on before, but stand thou still at this time." Then Samuel took the vial of oil and poured it upon his head and kissed him and anointed him to be prince over the Children of Israel.

Saul now returned homeward, learning as Samuel had told him, that the asses had been found; but he said nothing for a time about having been anointed by the seer.

After this, Samuel being now a very old man, called the people together and said to them: "Ye have said, 'Set a king over us.' Now, therefore, present yourselves by your tribes and by your thousands." The

tribes of Israel came near, and then Samuel chose out the tribe of Benjamin; then the tribe of Benjamin came up closer, and Samuel chose out the family of Saul, and then Saul was looked for, but when they sought him he could not be found. It seems he must have been all in a tremble over what was coming to him, and he had gone away and hid himself. But they ran and fetched him, and when he stood among the people, he was higher than all the people, from his shoulders upward. And Samuel said to all of the people: "See ye him who hath been chosen; there is none like him among all the people." And all the people shouted and said, "Let the king live!"

And so at last they had what they had been longing for, a king; and the Children of Israel for the time being were pleased and satisfied.

TO THE TEACHER: The veneration for Samuel might be dwelt upon in this lesson. The reason for it could be attributed to some extent to the absence of self-assertion on his part. On the other hand, indicate how reluctant people are, to take any sort of good advice when it goes against their immediate wishes, as with the Children of Israel at this time. The modest character of Saul might be commented on, because it must be contrasted with the change which took place in him later on. The speech of Samuel could be recited aloud, telling what would happen if the people succeeded in having a king. Note how the people gave no reply, save just in the determined wish that a king should be selected for them.

CHAPTER XL.

Saul the King.

All was now going to be changed among the Israelites. How much it meant, they themselves could not see. At first, to be sure, everything went on just as before. Saul did not set up a government or do any of those things which had been spoken of by Samuel, when Samuel warned the people what they must expect if they had a king to rule over them.

The whole experience was new and strange to the young man. He did not know how he was to act as king, or what it meant to be a ruler. All he did, therefore, was to go back home and wait until the time should come when the people should call him to lead them in some way. In spite of what Samuel had done, as yet there was no real king and no real kingdom.

But the need came soon enough. The Israelites were surrounded by people who hated them, wicked tribes who abused them in many ways and ruled over them from time to time. Now, it seems that one of those tribes, called the Ammonites, came up and attacked one of the tribes of Israel. And the Israelites felt that they were not strong enough at first to resist, and so they sent out messengers to the king of the Ammonites, asking him on what terms he would accept their services. And the king sent back the reply: "On the condition that all your right eyes be put out."

The people knew what this implied well enough. It would be the worst and most brutal kind of slavery. The fathers looked into their children's eyes and thought what it would mean for the eyes of those

little ones to be put out, or the eyes of their wives, and it was more than they could stand. And the elders said to the king of the Ammonites: "Give us seven days in which to decide." Then they sent messengers at once to the place where Saul lived, telling the people of it. And all the people lifted up their voices and wept. And behold, Saul came, following the oxen out of the field; and Saul said: "What aileth the people that they weep?" And the messengers told him what had been threatened them from the Ammonites.

Then the spirit of a true king began to show itself in Saul. He saw how the time had come for him to go forth as a leader and set up a kingdom. He took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces, and sent the pieces throughout all the borders of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying: "Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul, and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen." And the people came out as one man.

Saul now led the army forth and attacked the Ammonites, and smote them until the heat of the day. And it came to pass that the Ammonites were scattered so that not two of them were left together.

This was a great victory for the Children of Israel, the first one, I suppose, that they had had for many years. They were more than satisfied, therefore, with the idea that they were going to have a king. And Samuel said to the people: "Come and let us go to Gilgal and establish the kingdom there." And the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king. And Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

But the most striking event at this time, I think, was not so much that great battle, or the formal way in which they made Saul king after their victory when they went to Gilgal, but rather the farewell speech made to them at this time by Samuel. He had been their leader and teacher all his life. They had never had a king before. Now that he was no longer to guide them, he wanted to say a few words of warning. Wise men, you see, can often look quite a long

distance into the future, and they are the men who point out the dangers which most people do not think of.

At this time, when Saul had been made king and all the people were holding a great festival in their delight over the founding of the kingdom, Samuel asked the people for silence. It was a solemn moment, as the great crowd stood there waiting and listening.

And Samuel said to the Children of Israel: "Behold, I hearkened unto your voice, in all that ye have said unto me, and have made a king over you. And now, behold, the king walketh before you. I am old and gray-headed; I have walked before you from my youth to this day. Here I am—witness against me. Whose ox have I taken, or whose ass have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Of whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind mine eyes therewith?" And they said: "Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken a bribe of any kind." And he said unto them: "The Lord is witness against you that ye have not found aught against me. Ye said unto me: 'A king shall rule over us. Now, therefore, behold the king whom ye have chosen. If ye will fear the Lord and serve him, and not rebel against the commandments you have received, both ye and also the king that reigneth over you—well! Only fear the Lord and serve him in truth, with all your heart. Turn ye not aside, for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; but if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.'"

We might suppose that this would be the last word which we should hear from the aged Samuel. He was no longer the leader of the Children of Israel. In his place they had Saul, their king. But once more, I am sorry to say, Samuel comes before us as a judge, and he is to appear, not as a judge of the people so much as a judge of their new king, Saul.

For a time all went well. New hope had come to the Children of Israel; they had a great king, and he was leading them to many victories. The people were

no longer afraid of the Philistines. They were assembled in armies and beginning once more to conquer the country for themselves. As we are told: When Saul was made king over Israel he fought against all his enemies on every side, against the Moabites and against the children of Ammon, and against the Edomites and against the Philistines. Whithersoever Saul turned, he put his enemies to the worse. And he did valiantly and smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of the wicked people of Canaan.

You see, Saul had begun well, as a true king. But the one great thing which the Children of Israel long years before had had so much trouble in learning, you remember, was to obey rules. It was because they could not do this, that they had been obliged to stay forty years in the wilderness; and it was for this same reason, I suppose, that they had been such a long time in conquering the land of Canaan and taking full possession of the Promised Land.

Now that a king was to reign over the people of Israel, everything depended on whether the man chosen for this office would know not only how to rule, but also obey rules himself; for kings cannot do as they please, if they are good kings, any more than the people can. They must know how to obey laws and set an example to the people. In this respect Saul had not yet been tried, and Samuel did not know how he would act. He had chosen this young man as the best king he could find for the Israelites; yet before he died he wanted to make sure that Saul could obey rules or commands. And this is what Samuel did.

It was the time when Saul was fighting with the Amalekites, and Samuel had said to Saul, speaking for the Great Ruler: "Now go and smite the Amalekites, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; slay both man and beast, ox and sheep, camel and ass."

And Saul went forth with his army, like a brave king, and fought with the Amalekites, and slew them with great slaughter, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.

But what else do you suppose he did? What about the oxen and the sheep, the camels and asses Samuel had spoken of? Now, it evidently struck the young man, the king, that he would do something else in this other matter; he would follow his own best judgment. And so he spared the best of the sheep and the oxen and the lambs, and he did not destroy them. It may be that he felt that he no longer needed to obey the commands of Samuel or of the Lord Over All, but that as a king he had the right to do just as he pleased.

And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him: "I have performed the commandment of the Lord." Just think of that speech on the part of the king! It may have been the first lie that he had ever told. He knew well enough that he had not performed the command in the right way. And Samuel's heart sank within him, for he had found out that Saul not only had failed to keep the command laid upon him, but now had told a lie concerning it. Think how it must have startled Saul at this moment as he heard the voice of the old man, the seer whom he had met a few years ago, as Samuel said: "What meaneth, then, this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" And Saul, seeing that he had been found out, tried to avoid the blame by laying it on the people, and said: "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen to sacrifice them unto the Lord."

And the seer said to Saul: "I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me." And Saul said, "Say on." And Samuel answered, speaking for the Lord: "Though thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head over the tribes of Israel? And the Lord annointed thee king over Israel, and he sent thee on a journey and said, 'Go, utterly destroy the Amalekites and fight against them until they be consumed.' Wherefore didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and do that which was evil in the sight of the Lord?" And Saul again tried to

get out of the trouble by answering once more: "The people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, to make an offering to the Lord." And then came the solemn reply of Samuel, which the world has never forgotten: "Hath the Lord as great delight in offerings or sacrifices as he has in obedience? Behold, to obey is better than to make sacrifices. Because thou hast rejected the command laid upon thee, thou hast been rejected from being king."

Then the awful fact came home to Saul. He was conscience-stricken, and hardly knew what to say, as he finally answered: "I have done wrong, for I have broken the commandment laid upon me, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. Now, therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin."

But it was too late for poor Saul. He had broken a command, he had failed to keep the law laid upon him. Even if he was sorry, he no longer could be trusted. And Samuel could only repeat solemnly again: "Thou hast rejected the command and been rejected from being king over Israel."

TO THE TEACHER: The speech of Samuel in his old age as a farewell to the people when surrendering his authority over them, should be carefully studied as explaining his character. Make a good deal of the story of Saul's sin and disobedience. Compare it with the giving in to temptation on the part of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Show how hard it is to do exactly right, and how easily one may give way when one begins to feel one's power, or has been accustomed to do as one pleases. The reason why Saul was condemned, should be discussed, pointing out that even a king may not be a good ruler unless he has *principle* and can keep to rules and obey laws.

MEMORY VERSES: *If ye shall do wickedly ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.*

Hath the Lord as great delight in offerings and sacrifice as he has in obedience; behold, to obey is better than to make sacrifices.

Thou hast rejected the command and been rejected from being king over Israel.

CHAPTER XLI.

The Boy David.

Samuel had now to find a new man for a king over Israel. As yet, however, we take it for granted that the people still clung to Saul, and we are quite sure that Saul would not have been ready to step down and let somebody else become king in his place. But Samuel knew that his had to be, just the same. It was only a matter of time, and then the reign of Saul would come to an end, and a new man become king over Israel. I suppose Samuel felt very unhappy over all this, because he was much less sure now that a really good man could be found, inasmuch as he had thought that Saul was going to make a good king, and would be a man who could be trusted, who would serve the people and set them an example of obedience. But, as we are told, the Lord said to Samuel: "Fill thine horn with oil and go; I will send thee to Jesse at Bethlehem, and there thou shalt find a king among his sons." And Samuel said: "How can I go? If Saul hear it, he will kill me." But he was told to go, nevertheless. And Samuel did that which the Great Ruler commanded and came to Bethlehem; and the elders of the city came to meet him and said, "Comest thou peaceably?" and he said, "Peaceably."

Then he found Jesse and called him and the sons of Jesse to sacrifice before the Lord. As yet Samuel did not know which one of the sons would become the king. One after the other stood before him, and he waited to decide.

When the first son appeared, Samuel thought that this was to be the one; but the Great Ruler said to Samuel: "Look not upon his countenance, or upon

his stature, because I have rejected him. The Lord seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

Then Jesse called the next son and made him pass before Samuel, and Samuel said: "This is not the one." Then again the third son came, and the third son was rejected. And so Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse: "The Lord hath not chosen these. Are here all thy children?" And Jesse said: "There remaineth yet the youngest, and behold, he keepeth the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse: "Send and fetch him, for we will not sit down until he come hither."

And Jesse sent and brought him in. Now, the boy was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon. Samuel knew at once that this was the one whom the Lord meant. He could tell it somehow by the look in the boy's face. There was something noble and kindly about him. And Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him there in the presence of his brothers. What it all meant, the boy himself could not understand. Samuel did not explain to him, I suppose, waiting, perhaps, until some future time to tell him how he was to become king over Israel. And the boy's name was David.

Now I shall tell you how young David made a great name for himself in a battle with the Philistines. Just how long it was after the anointing by Samuel, I cannot say. David was as yet scarcely a grown man, and had been kept by his father to tend the sheep.

In the meantime the Philistines, who had long before made so much trouble for the Israelites, had gathered together their armies to battle. Although they had been defeated before by Saul, yet they had not been wholly conquered, and now they rose up once more, having made up their minds that they would overthrow the Israelites. The time was now coming, when it would be decided once for all which should rule Canaan, the Israelites or the Philistines.

The army of the Philistines was now larger than ever before. Even Saul the king was dismayed. He

and the men of Israel were gathered together and set in battle array against the Philistines.

And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and the Israelites stood on a mountain on the other side, and there was a valley between them. And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, a giant, taller than any other man in all the land of Canaan. It is said that he was eight or nine feet high, perhaps the tallest man that ever lived; then, too, he was great and strong in every way, so that it gave terror to the people even to look at him.

As we are told, he had a helmet of brass upon his head, and he was clad with a coat of mail, and he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a javelin of brass between his shoulders, and the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam. And his shield bearer went before him. His name, as we know, was Goliath.

And Goliath stood and cried out unto the army of Israel: "Why are ye come out to set your battle array? Am I not a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? Choose you a man from you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me and kill me, then will we be your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then shall ye be our servants and serve us." And the Philistine said: "I defy the armies of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together." And when Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

This was anything but a cheerful time for the Israelites. There was their king whom they had chosen and who was looked up to by the people, and even he was afraid of that giant, although we can scarcely blame him. But now I come to what young David had to do with all this, because I am telling this story solely on account of David.

You remember we said that David's father was named Jesse, and the three eldest sons of Jesse had gone after Saul, while David was kept behind to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem. But by and by Jesse became very anxious to hear about his three sons who

were in the army. He did not know but that something might have happened to them, and he was aware how dangerous the Philistines were. None other of the Canaanites were so much dreaded by the Children of Israel.

And Jesse said unto David: "Take now to thy brethren this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to thy brethren, and bring these ten cheeses unto the captain of the company, and see how thy brethren fare." And David rose up early in the morning and left the sheep with the keeper, and took and went as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the army just as the men were going forth to fight.

And David left his goods in the hands of the keeper of the baggage and ran ahead among the soldiers and came and saluted his brothers. Now it was just at this very time when the giant Philistine, whose name was Goliath, had stepped forth from the ranks of the Philistines and spoken those bold words I have told you of, and David heard them.

And the men of Israel said to the boy: "Have you seen this giant that is come up? Surely it is to defy Israel that he has come up, and it shall be that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter for a wife." And David said: "Who is this Philistine that he should dare to defy the armies of the Lord?" And his eldest brother heard him say this, and was very angry with him, thinking that the lad was talking boastfully. And he said to David: "Why art thou come down, and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? Thou hast come down that thou mightest see the battle." But David only answered: "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?" And he turned away from his brother and kept making the same remark to one soldier after another: "Who is this Philistine that should dare to defy the armies of the Lord?" And as one man after another heard the lad say this, finally his words were carried to Saul the king,

And Saul sent for David, and David said to Saul: "Let no man's heart fail because of him. Thy servant will go and fight with the Philistine." And Saul said to David, smiling to himself, I suppose: "Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for thou art but a youth, and he a great man of war."

We must not think that David was talking boastfully, because at this time he was a modest lad. But you see, he had self-reliance; he was used to being alone in the country looking after his father's sheep, so that he knew how to take care of himself and not be afraid. Besides this, he had learned how to use one weapon very skillfully, and that was the sling. Now the sling might be just as good as any other weapon in fighting with Goliath; it all depended on having skill and self-reliance. Some people, as you know, never feel able to do anything alone, but usually, when anything important has to be done, want somebody to help them.

David was the kind of a lad who could take care of himself, and had no fear even in doing something alone, if he knew that he had the skill. For it only meant not getting excited or being afraid at something because that something was very big. This man Goliath was perhaps not especially dangerous, save that he was a very big man, and could frighten people by his size when they looked at him. It might have been just as easy to conquer him as to conquer any other of the Philistines. The trouble was that the Israelites became just like children; they got scared and could not use their minds.

But this boy David, having the way of using his mind constantly, alone when taking care of the sheep, had no fear of Goliath because he was big. He knew that the Philistine was no more to be feared than any other of the enemy.

At the same time he did not mind it, even if Saul did smile a little, because he knew it looked strange—he, a small lad, offering to do battle with the Philistine. And this is what David said to Saul: "Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and when there came a lion or a bear and took a lamb out of the flock, I caught him

and slew him. Thy servant smote the lion and the bear, and this Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing that he hath dared to defy the armies of the Lord."

And Saul said unto David, "Go." But first he clad David with his armor, putting a helmet of brass upon his head, and giving him a coat of mail. And David took his sword and started to go. Then, however, he said to Saul: "I cannot wear this armor," and he put it off.

By this time, I suppose, Saul had made up his mind to let the lad have his own way. There must have been something brave and strong about David which commanded the respect of Saul. The boy went forth, therefore, without any armor, clad just as he had been when he came from his father. But he had his staff and his favorite sling. So he went down to a brook and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, and he drew near to the Philistine.

And Goliath the Philistine came on and drew near unto David, and the man bearing the shield went before him. And when the Philistine looked about and saw David, he laughed at him, saying: "Am I a dog that thou comest to me with staves?" And then, in his disgust, he cursed David, saying: "Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air and to the beasts of the field." And David answered: "Thou comest to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin; but I come unto thee in the name of the Lord and the armies of Israel; this day will the Lord deliver thee into my hand, and I will smite thee, and I will take thy head from off thee, and I will give the carcasses of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air and unto all the wild beasts of the earth, that all may know that the Lord saveth not with the sword and spear. He will give you into our hand."

You see, what made David so quiet and composed was his perfect peace of conscience. He knew he was in the right, and that the Philistines were a wicked people who deserved to be defeated at the hands of

Israel. Again and again for thousands of years this perfect peace of conscience, making people feel sure of being in the right, has helped them to win the victory. And it was to help David now.

And David put his hand in his bag and took thence a stone and slung it, and smote the Philistine in the forehead, and the stone sank into the forehead of the Philistine, and he fell upon his face to the earth; then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword, drew it out of the sheath and cut off the man's head. And when the Philistines saw that their leader was dead, they fled in dismay. Then the armies of Israel arose, pursued the Philistines and won a great victory over them. The real victory, however, belonged to David, in the manly self-reliance he had shown, with his peace of conscience, making him feel sure that he was right in the cause for which he was fighting.

TO THE TEACHER: We still do not lose sight of Samuel. Comment upon his skill in not simply judging by outward appearances. There is a great ethical lesson here which must be fully expanded. The serenity of mind on the part of David should be talked over, as not being weak assertion or boastfulness, but a simple trust in what was right. The second episode of this story, with David facing the big Philistine, but repeats the lesson of the first episode in the choice of David on the part of Samuel. Make it plain that if David had been boastful or conceited he would probably have failed in his attack on Goliath.

MEMORY VERSE: *The Lord seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.*

CHAPTER XLII.

Saul's Jealousy of David.

It is not often that a young lad has the courage to go out and face a giant such as Goliath. What is more, it is not often that a lad has the self-reliance by which he could continue to the end, after he had started out. Many a person might think he could do it, until the time came; but just at the moment when he had to face the danger he might be overcome by fear and not go ahead and fight.

But David was another kind of a person. As I have told you, he had self-reliance, partly because of the kind of work he had to do, and partly because of the way he had behaved in his earlier years. All his good conduct in former times now meant a great deal, because it was owing to that conduct and the character it had given him, that he was now able to be perfectly calm when he went out to kill Goliath.

Just think what an excitement this must have made in the camp of the Israelites! They themselves, the grown men, had all been afraid; so that one man among the Philistines had been enough to scare a whole army, including Saul, the king. And now a young lad had been more brave than a whole army.

Saul himself wanted to find out who this brave boy could be, where he came from and who his father was. He had not met many boys like this. Then, too, there had been something so manly and yet so modest in the way David had behaved in the presence of the king that Saul felt that he would like to have a boy like this become one of his soldiers. As we are told: When Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host: "Abner,

whose son is this youth?" And Abner said: "As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell." And the king said: "Inquire whose son this stripling is." And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistines, he was brought before Saul, with the head of the Philistine in his hand.

This must have been a strange sight—the young lad walking in before the king, carrying a huge sword almost as tall as himself which he had taken from the giant, and with the head of the giant in his hand. Even Saul must have been astonished and almost afraid in the presence of David. But the youth was modest still, in spite of what he had done.

And Saul said to him: "Whose son art thou, thou young man?" And David answered: "I am the son of thy servant Jesse of Bethlehem."

This was all that was said between him and the king at that time—not a word more. Each one looked at the other, but kept his own thoughts to himself. David must have been pleased with the king Saul, I am sure, for Saul was a tall and handsome man, almost a giant himself.

But something else took place just at that moment, that I want to tell you about. It seems that over at one side in the great tent where this meeting happened between Saul and David, there was standing a young man not much older than David, a brave young fellow, who already was a soldier, because he was the son of King Saul. His name was Jonathan. And as this young man stood there watching David and noticing what was said between him and his father, it seemed as if the heart of Jonathan went out of itself to the boy David, right then and there. He said to himself: "That is the kind of a man I should like to have for my friend." And what is more, David, also looking at Jonathan, had the same feeling for his own part. The moment they looked at each other they felt drawn together. As I have told you in my story, it came to pass that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul, and it was just the same with David toward Jonathan.

Then Jonathan, who was dressed, of course, in a special way as the son of the king, unlike his friend, and feeling that he wanted to have David honored like himself, at once stripped himself of the robe that was upon him and gave it to David, and his apparel, even to his sword and to his bow and to his girdle.

It goes without saying that David, after his great deed, was not allowed to go back to his home in order to tend his father's sheep. A brave young man like this was needed in the army. I suppose the father at home must have been rather sad over it all, for he had loved the boy very much, and surely did not want to part with him. But he knew that the time had now come when the Children of Israel must take their stand and fight the Philistines. He was willing, therefore, that his boy David should remain in the army. As we are told, Saul took David that day and would not let him go to his father's house. And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him and behaved himself wisely. And Saul set him over the men of war, and it was good in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

One would have fancied that all would now go well between him and Saul, inasmuch as David was a modest young man and not given to bragging or boasting in any way. But the trouble was that a change came over Saul himself. He had not been the same man since he had disobeyed the command of the Great Ruler, as you remember. When a man once breaks a rule that way and does what he knew he ought not to have done, it very often changes his whole spirit. He begins to have mean or bad feelings such as he may never have had before. And it was just so with Saul. I think if the king had not disobeyed at that time after what Samuel had said to him, that no trouble would ever have come between David and Saul.

But as it was, something unpleasant happened. It seems that when the army returned with David and Saul from the slaughter of the Philistines the women came out of the cities to welcome King Saul. And

it was the custom in those days for them to come singing and dancing with timbrels, with joy, and with instruments of music; and this is what they sang: "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." Now, of course, this had not really taken place; David had not slain ten thousand men; but it was their way of showing how the people exulted in that David had killed a great giant, and so had given courage to the army. It was as though he had slain thousands of the Philistines because he had killed their leader. You might have fancied that Saul would have been pleased over this, knowing that David was only a boy, and that it was only a feeling of joy on the part of the people over the bravery of a young Israelite. But the trouble was, Saul was not the same man he used to be. Instead of being pleased over the singing of the women, he became very angry and had a great feeling of jealousy against David. Think how contemptible this was, that strong, mighty king being jealous of a young boy! Wouldn't you suppose that he would be ashamed of himself and want to hide the feeling? But, as we are told, Saul was very wroth, for this saying displeased him, and he said: "They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but a thousand. And what can he have more, but the kingdom?"

Then and there Saul wished he had not kept David as a soldier in the army. He was curiously jealous of him, and instead of being kind to him wanted to kill him. This was pretty hard for poor David after the service he had shown to Saul and the whole army. Instead of being praised for what he had done he saw an unpleasant look on the face of Saul now whenever they met. As we are told, Saul eyed David from that day forward.

The very next day David found out how Saul felt toward him. It seems that the young boy had known how to play the harp. He must have learned this as a shepherd. And it so happened that Saul was given to having very unpleasant moods, when he could scarcely control himself. This must have been a good deal

worse since that evil act which he had been guilty of. And when Saul learned that David could play the harp he asked the lad to come into his tent and play for him in order to quiet those moods. Meanwhile as David was playing, I am sorry to say the bad feelings grew worse and worse in the heart of Saul. He kept thinking about what the women had sung, and he grew more and more jealous of the boy. And Saul had his spear in his hand, and he cast the spear, saying: "I will smite David." But David was able to dodge and fled from the tent.

After that Saul tried very hard to control himself, and for a time he succeeded. He made David captain in the army, and David went out and came in before the people, and David behaved himself wisely in all his ways. And when Saul saw that David behaved himself wisely he stood in awe of David. It often happens, you know, that people have to admire a certain person in spite of themselves, if that person is really superior to them and behaves better than they do. They may hate him and wish to do him injury, but in other ways they cannot help looking up to him and admiring him. David was that sort of a person. And all Israel loved David because of what he had done, and also because of the kind of a young man he was.

I must tell you a little more at this time of what happened between David and Saul. It seems that David and the daughter of the king found that they were loving each other, and they wished to become man and wife. This was told Saul, and you may suppose that he would be very angry indeed over it all, inasmuch as he had such bad feelings toward David. And as a matter of fact, he was furiously angry; but in another way it pleased him very much, and I will explain why.

You see, Saul said to himself: "If David is in love with my daughter, then I will tell him that before he can have her for his wife he must show himself very brave as a soldier and kill one hundred of the Philistines, our enemies." He thought if this command was laid upon David, then David would try to do this

for his love, in order to show how brave he was, and then be killed by the Philistines. This all strikes us as very low and mean, and our feeling for Saul has to change very much. According to my story, Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David. They told the king, and the thing pleased him. And Saul said, I will give him to her in order that it may be a snare to him and destroy him." And he said to his servants: "Talk with David secretly, and say, 'Behold, the king hath delight in thee and all his servants love thee, and therefore be the king's son-in-law. The king, however, desireth not any dowry, but that you should kill one hundred of our enemies, the Philistines.'" And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well.

It was no easy matter to go out and fight with the Philistines, for they were a dangerous people; but David was a brave man; he thought not only of his love for Michal, the king's daughter, but of the service he would do for the Children of Israel in making war upon their enemies. He took his armor, therefore, and went forth determined to succeed or die. We fancy the Philistines must have remembered him, the young man who had killed their leader, and they must have been sore afraid. But, be it as it may, he went ahead and slaughtered two hundred of them, twice as many as required by Saul. When this was made known to the king, there was nothing left for Saul to do but to keep his word, and he gave his daughter to be the wife of David.

TO THE TEACHER: This could be treated as a lesson in jealousy. The source of it all must be traced to the first sin of disobedience. The judgment pronounced upon Saul by Samuel still followed him, and his conscience somehow justified it. Point out how the mean feeling seemed to conquer all the other good feelings he once had had. The story is a sad and painful one. Yet it must be told because of its importance in connection with the whole narrative. Emphasis could be laid on the low, underhand conduct which this jealousy led to, on the part of Saul.

CHAPTER XLIII.

David and Jonathan.

I must tell you more now about the beautiful friendship between David and Jonathan. All this while they had been most fond of each other, and it had pleased Jonathan very much that his sister should become the wife of David. Whenever it had been possible Jonathan had been of service to him and stood by him. Ever since those days, for hundreds and thousands of years, people have talked about this friendship because it was so perfect. Whenever they wanted to describe how two men were friends to each other in a devoted way they have said, "They are like David and Jonathan." I must therefore show you how they stood by each other.

It must have been very sad indeed for Jonathan to know how his father felt toward David. You see, a father is a father, and this son truly loved his father. What was more, Saul was a good father to Jonathan; the unfortunate thing was the bad feeling in the heart of Saul, the wicked jealousy which had started there and had grown into hate toward David.

What do you suppose Saul said, therefore, to his son Jonathan? Why, he commanded him to kill David. What an awful blow this must have been, to be told that he must kill his own dearest friend! Now Jonathan knew that this would be wrong. He was a grown man; he had to judge for himself, and he knew that it would not be right for him to slay David. As my story runs, Saul spoke to Jonathan his son and to all his servants that they should slay David. But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David, and Jonathan told David, saying: "Saul, my father seeketh to

slay thee; now therefore I pray thee take heed to thyself in the morning and abide in a secret place and hide and I will commune with my father of thee, and if I see aught, I will tell thee."

And Jonathan spoke good of David to Saul his father, and said unto him: "Let not the king sin against his servant, David; for he hath not sinned against thee, and his works have been to thee very good; he put his life into his hands and smote the Philistines and a great victory was won for all Israel; thou sawest it and didst rejoice. Wherefore dost thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?"

I am glad to say that Saul's heart was touched by this appeal from his brave son. He had loved this boy, and he felt heartily ashamed of what he had been doing. His conscience had stirred within him. Sometimes, you know, a man's conscience will seem all covered over, and then again be aroused by a voice like this and make a man feel ashamed. And so it was with Saul. As we are told, Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan and he said, "David shall not be put to death."

Fancy how glad Jonathan must have been that he could now love his father and David as he had before, and also keep his father from doing a great wrong! You see, what Saul had planned would not only have been murder or the most awful crime one could commit, but besides this there would have been an awful ingratitude after what David had done for him.

For a time now all went happily. David was brought into the presence of Saul and served in his army. Every now and then he also played on the harp before Saul when the bad moods came over the king. But one time, alas! the wicked jealousy started up again in the heart of the king as he listened to David playing on the harp. It is so hard, you see, for bad feelings to keep down out of sight after they have once had an influence over a man and a man has once listened to them. All of a sudden the hate which Saul felt overcame him, and Saul sought to smite David again with

his spear. But David slipped away and fled to his home. Then Saul sent messengers unto David's house to watch him so that they could slay him in the morning. And Michal, David's wife, told him, saying: "If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou shalt be slain."

So Michal let David down through a window, and he went and fled and escaped.

The only thing that David could do now was to go once more to his friend Jonathan. He knew that it would be very hard to bear, when his friend was told how the bad feeling had arisen once more in the heart of Saul. But Jonathan had to know about it. And David said: "What have I done, what is my iniquity, what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?" And Jonathan answered: "Thou shalt not die; behold, my father doeth nothing either great or small but that he discloseth it unto me, and why should my father hide this thing from me? It is not so."

This must have come very hard for poor David. He had to tell Jonathan plainly what Saul was trying to do, and to tell all this about Jonathan's own father. If David could have done it, he would have spared his friend and gone away. But he had to tell the truth. Jonathan would know it sooner or later. And David said to Jonathan: "Thy father knoweth it well that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved. But, truly as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death." And Jonathan said unto David: "Whatever thy soul desireth I will do it for thee." And David said unto Jonathan: "Behold, to-morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat. But let me go, that I may hide myself in the field until the third day at even. If thy father miss me at all, then say, David earnestly asked to go away. If Saul say thus, It is well, thy servant shall have rest; but if he be wroth, then know that evil is determined by him. Therefore, deal kindly with thy servant. But if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself,

for why shouldest thou bring me to thy father?" And Jonathan said: "Far be it from me; for if I should at all know that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee?" And Jonathan said unto David: "Come, let us go out into the field." And they went out, both of them, into the field.

And Jonathan said unto David: "When I have sounded my father about this time to-morrow or the third day, behold, if there be good toward David shall I not send then unto thee and disclose it unto thee? To-morrow is the new moon; thou shalt be missed, for thy seat will be empty. When thou hast stayed three days, thou shalt come to the place where thou didst hide thyself before, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel. And I will shoot three arrows, as though I shot at a mark; and behold, I will send the lad, saying: 'Go, find the arrows.' If I say unto the lad, 'Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee,' take them and come, for there is peace to thee and no hurt. But if I say thus unto the boy, 'Behold, the arrows are beyond thee,' go thy way."

So David hid himself in the field. And when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat, and the king sat upon his seat as at other times; and Jonathan stood up, and Abner sat by Saul's side. But David's place was empty. Nevertheless Saul said not anything that day, for he thought something had befallen him. And it came to pass on the morrow after the new moon, the second day, David's place was empty, and Saul said unto Jonathan, his son: "Wherefore comes not the son of Jesse?" And Jonathan answered Saul: "David asked leave of me to go away." Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him: "Do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own shame; for as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom."

We have found out now what was the real cause of the bad feeling on the part of Saul. He was afraid that the people would become very fond of David and want to make David king; and he was trying to arouse

the same bad feeling in the mind of Jonathan, so that Jonathan might become jealous and anxious lest he should not become king after his father's death. In this way Saul surely felt that he would be able to win his son Jonathan over to do as he told him. And he said therefore to Jonathan: "Send now and fetch David unto me, for he shall surely die." And Jonathan answered Saul his father and said unto him: "Wherefore should he be put to death? What has he done?" Then Saul in his fury cast his spear at Jonathan, trying to kill him. You can see now how bad Saul had become. He had lost all self-control, so that in his anger he would even kill his own boy. It must have almost broken the heart of poor Jonathan. In sorrow he had to go away. He left the table without eating anything, for he was grieved for David because of what his father was trying to do. You notice that nothing is said about Jonathan being grieved about himself. All that troubled him now was that wicked feeling which he had observed in his father's heart, and the fact that his friend David's life was in danger.

Then it came to pass the next morning that Jonathan went out in the field at the time appointed with David, with a little lad with him; and he said unto the lad: "Run, find the arrows which I shoot." And as the lad ran he shot an arrow beyond him, and when the lad was come to the place of the arrow Jonathan cried after him and said, "Is not the arrow beyond thee?" And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows and came to his master, but the lad knew not anything. Only David for himself understood what it meant. And Jonathan gave his weapons unto the lad and said unto him: "Go, carry them to the city." And as soon as the lad was gone David arose out of his place and came to Jonathan and they embraced and wept one with the other, and Jonathan said to David: "Go in peace."

This was enough. Their hearts were too full to speak. David knew he must flee or die. And Jonathan could not do anything for his friend, but had to go back to the city, sad at heart.

TO THE TEACHER: This should be narrated more as a tale of sentiment, with the emphasis on the beautiful relationship between David and Jonanthan; saying little further of Saul's bad spirit or evil conduct. On the other hand, point out the noble attitude of Jonathan toward his father and how he tried to shield his parent and defend him, aiming at the same time to protect David. Dwell much upon this beautiful friendship between David and Jonathan so that the incidents shall never be forgotten in the minds of the young people.

CHAPTER XLIV.

How David Behaved Toward Saul.

I think we must almost have a feeling of pity for poor Saul at this time. When bad feelings get into a man's heart they spoil all the pleasures of life for him; they make it so that he cannot love others and others cannot love him. Saul could not help knowing that Jonathan must have been pained over what had taken place and could not any longer have the same feeling toward his father. What is more, Saul knew that the people loved David and that they might lose their love for himself, and he could not trust them any more. In this way he became suspicious of everybody.

At one time, for instance, when Saul was sitting under a tamarisk tree in Ramah with his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him, he quite lost control of himself and showed his bad feelings, as he cried out: "Here, now, will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards; will he make you captains of thousands and hundreds; have all you conspired against me, and there is none that discloseth to me when my son maketh a league with the son of Jesse; there are none of you that are sorry for me?"

But all this could do no good. It only made matters worse, because in this way Saul made the people dislike him, while he had to feel all the more ashamed of himself.

He made up his mind, however, once for all now, that he would find young David and kill him. Jonathan knew all about this, and so he came where David was hiding and said to him: "Fear not, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt

be king over Israel." Was not this brave and noble on the part of Jonathan? According to the custom, Jonathan as the son of Saul would have become king after Saul's death. But he felt that it would be better for Israel that David, his friend, should become king instead of himself; and so he told this frankly to his dear friend. And I am sure they must have loved each other more than ever.

Yet all the while Saul was trying to find David, who was hiding in the wood. And some men came and told Saul where David was hidden, saying to him: "Now, therefore, O king, come down, according to all the desire of thy soul to come down: and our part shall be to deliver David up into the king's hand." And Saul answered: "Go, I pray you, make yet more sure and know and see this place where he hideth and who have seen him there. See, therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself and come ye again to me and I will go with you. It shall come to pass if he be in the land that I will search him out among all the thousands of Judah."

But while Saul was pursuing David in this way, some messengers came to him, saying: "Haste thee and come, for the Philistines have made a raid up the land." So Saul returned from pursuing after David and went against the Philistines. And it came to pass when Saul had returned from following the Philistines that it was told him, saying: "Behold, David is in the Wilderness of Engedi." Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats; and he came to the sheep cotes by the way, where was a cave, and Saul went in to rest there.

Now David and his men were abiding in the innermost part of this very cave.

The chance had now come for David to take vengeance on Saul. All he had to do was to steal up quietly and kill him then and there. He knew that if he did this, the Israelites would at once come to his side and make him king. He had been persecuted for a

long while now, and knew if it went on longer he would probably have to die. It seemed as if this was a rare chance for David to save himself and put Saul to death.

At once, therefore, his men said to him: "Now is the time; behold the day is at hand of which it has been told thee, when thine enemies shall fall into thy hands and thou shouldst do unto them as it seemed good unto thee."

What do you suppose David did at that time? Well, I will tell you, if you do not know already. He saw that his men wanted at once to seize the king and kill him. But he replied: "No. This man has been made king by the Lord. Should I do this thing to put forth mine hand against him?" So David checked his men with these words and suffered them not to rise against Saul. But I will tell you what he did. He went and cut off a part of the robe that Saul wore. You will soon learn why this was done by David.

Before long, Saul awoke and went outside the cave, and lo and behold as he was standing there, who should walk out behind him and appear before his face but David! Think how this must have startled Saul. Then and there I suppose he might have struck David down. But as he looked at him, David only said: "My lord the king." And David bowed with his face to the earth. While Saul was standing there amazed at all this, David began to speak once more, saying: "Wherefore hearkenest thou to men's words, saying David seeketh thy hurt; behold this day thine eyes have seen thy life delivered into mine hands in the cave; and some bade me kill thee. But I spared thee, and I said I will not put forth my hand against my lord the king, for he was made king by the Lord. Moreover, my father, see the part of thy robe in my hand; for in that I cut off a part of thy robe and killed thee not; see that there is neither evil nor transgression in my hand, and I have not sinned against thee, though thou layest wait for me to seize me. The Lord judge between thee and me; but mine hand shall not be upon thee."

This was a brave way of acting, and alas! not the usual way in those days. It was such noble behavior on the part of David to return good for evil! I always like to think of this story and remember how David might have taken vengeance on his enemy, and yet refused to do so, seeking to show him that no evil was meant, on his own part, trying in this way to restore friendship between himself and the king. There he stood with the piece of Saul's robe in his hand, and Saul saw at once how his life had been spared by David.

How do you suppose Saul acted at this moment? You remember, when Saul had begun as a young man, he had been good and true, with a noble heart and the best of feelings. He had changed because of his disobedience, and begun to have bad feelings such as he had not had in those days when he was a boy. Now the good feelings of his heart came back to him. And it came to pass when David had made an end of speaking those words, Saul said: "Is this thy voice, my son David?" And Saul lifted up his voice and wept, and he said to David: "Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rendered unto me good, whereas I have rendered unto thee evil; thou hast declared this day how thou hast dealt well with me in that thou killest me not. If a man finds his enemy, will he let his enemy go well away? But thou hast done this unto me this day, and now behold thou shalt surely be king over Israel."

It was the same, you see, as years before, when Saul stood first in the presence of David after the boy had killed Goliath. He had then felt somehow as if he was in the presence of a superior person, whom he had to admire and look up to in spite of himself, so that now at last he had to own outright that David was worthy to become king over Israel.

TO THE TEACHER: This is one of the most inspiring stories in the Bible, as illustrating the spirit of returning good for evil. It will not do to say that such

conduct would always have the same results. But it may be well to point out how it will sometimes work wonders in healing bad feelings or old-timed enmity between individuals. It would be wise to remind the children how Saul had been a wise, true man at one time; showing that good feelings may be revived in people, as in this case, if the right method has been employed. The language between David and Saul should be reviewed carefully and repeated over in the class.

MEMORY VERSE: *Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rendered unto me good, whereas I have rendered unto thee evil.*

CHAPTER XLV.

The Death of King Saul.

You may begin to be a little tired of all these sad happenings between David and Saul. It always pains us very much if, when a man has repented of his wrong-doings, changed in his feelings and made up his mind to do them no more—if then he goes back to his bad ways and bad feelings just the same. One has to be fighting all the while in order to resist temptation. But Saul did not know how to do this. He could fight like a brave soldier in the field against the Philistines; but he did not know how to fight the wicked feelings in his heart.

There is an old proverb, you know, which tells us that the man who conquers his anger is stronger than the man who conquers a city. It may be that this proverb arose from what people knew about Saul. He had conquered many cities, but he could not conquer his own anger. Think what he might have done if he had been a true man! He was the first king over Israel and might have made that people grand and glorious, helping them to overthrow the Philistines and to get back the land of Canaan into their possession. It is so hard for a man to be brave on the inside as well as brave on the outside. Many a person would rather go out and be a soldier and risk his life on the field of battle, than to carry on a fight against his own bad feelings.

But sad to say, Saul lost the victory over himself. He was conquered by his own jealousy and his anger, although David had spared his life and made him feel ashamed of himself; and after a while the old hate came back along with the wish to kill David.

What is worse, the grand old man Samuel, who had anointed Saul and made him king, had died not long before. It may be that he might have done something to change the heart of Saul; for he had been one of the great leaders of the Israelites, a noble teacher in Israel. But Samuel had gone to his rest and Saul was all alone. His son Jonathan still stayed with him; but he knew there could be no true, deep love for him on the part of Jonathan.

In the meantime David was showing himself a brave soldier in the land of Canaan. People were hearing about what a leader he was, and how boldly he would fight at the head of an army. At one time, for instance, when he was away from home, the city where he was staying was seized by the Amalekites and burned with fire. And when David and his men came to the city, behold it was burned with fire, and their wives and their sons and their daughters had been taken captives. Then David and the people that were with him, for a time could not control themselves; they lifted up their voices and wept. But brave men do not shed tears unless it be over some awful calamity; and even then they do not shed tears for long. David, like a true soldier, at once set about to go and attack the Amalekites.

So David went, having the six hundred men that were with him, and came to the brook Besor. But they had been without food and were very faint. David pursued, however, he and four hundred of them. And they found an Egyptian in the field and brought him to David and gave him bread that he might eat; and they gave him water that he might drink, and they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins; and when he had eaten his spirit came again to him, for he had eaten no bread and drunk no water three days and three nights. David and his men were almost in the same plight. But they said to him: "To whom belongest thou, from whence art thou?" And he said, "I am a servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me because three days ago I fell sick." And David said unto him,

"Wilt thou bring me down to the troop of the Amalekites?" And the man said, "Promise me that thou wilt neither kill me nor deliver me into the hands of my master and I will bring thee down to the hands of the Amalekites."

And when the man brought David down, behold there were the Amalekites spread all over the ground, eating, drinking and feasting, because of all the great spoil which they had taken. And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day. And David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken. And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, nor anything which had been taken from the Israelites.

And they came back, David and the four hundred, to the other two hundred men who had been too weak to go with them. And those who had done the fighting said: "Because they went not with us, we will not give them aught of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and children." Then said David to them: "Ye shall not do so, my brethren." He felt that the men who had been obliged to stay behind had been just as true soldiers as the others; but they had been ill for want of food. And so David answered: "As his share is, that goeth down to the battle, so shall his share be that had to wait by the brook: They shall all share alike."

But we have come now to the point where I must tell you what happened to Saul. Although he kept wishing to see David and put him to death, he had been forced to go on fighting with the Philistines. And in a great battle with this old enemy, the Israelites were defeated. What is saddest of all to us, Jonathan was killed. As we are told: The battle went sore against Saul and the archers overtook him. Then said Saul to his armor bearer: "Draw thy sword and thrust me through therewith, lest these Philistines come and thrust me through and make a mock of me." But his armor bearer would not, for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took his sword and fell upon it, and when his armor bearer saw that Saul was

dead, he likewise fell upon his sword and died with him. So Saul died and his three sons and his armor bearer, and all his men that same day together. And this was the end of Saul.

TO THE TEACHER: There should be a review of the whole life of Saul at this point, while a picture of him in his earlier days may be shown to the children. Touch upon the wise judgment of David in sharing the spoils even with those who had not fought in the battle.

MEMORY VERSE: *As his share is that cometh down to the battle, so shall his share be that had to wait by the brook; they shall all share alike.*

CHAPTER XLVI.

David Becomes the King.

We have told you a great deal about Saul. And yet he had not reigned a very long while, only a few years altogether. But it had been a sad and troublesome reign, for he had begun it in the wrong way, as you remember; it seemed as if a cloud hung over him all the while. It is a relief to us now that we do not have to hear any more about him, and I presume it was a relief to the Children of Israel when his end came.

At first David knew nothing of what had happened to Saul and Jonathan. He had been busy fighting with the Amalekites. But it came to pass that behold a man came out of the camp from Saul, with his clothes rent and earth upon his head. And so it was, when he came to David that he fell upon the earth and did obeisance. And David said unto him: "From whence comest thou?" And he said unto David: "Out of the camp of Israel have I escaped." And David said: "How went the matter, I pray thee tell me." And the man answered: "The people are fled from the battle and many of them are fallen and dead, and Saul and Jonathan are dead also."

Then David took hold of his clothes and rent them, and likewise all the men with him; and they mourned and wept and fasted until evening because of Saul and Jonathan his son, and for the people of Israel fallen by the sword.

This must have been an awful blow to David. I think he would have been willing to have given up his life for the sake of Jonathan. They had loved each other so well! It had never crossed David's mind,

we are quite sure, that Jonathan would be killed. And now poor David was almost heart-broken, although he knew that his enemy Saul was dead and that he would now become king over Israel.

As we are told: David lamented over Saul and over Jonathan his son, and he had the Israelites learn a song in memory of Jonathan called the "Song of the Bow." These are some of the words of the song: "Thy glory, O Israel, is slain upon thy high places! How are the mighty fallen! Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no rain or dew upon you, for there the shield of the mighty was cast aside! How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan is slain upon the high places! I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan. Very pleasant hast thou been unto me. Thy love to me was wonderful. How are the mighty fallen and the weapons of war perished."

Some time after this, the elders of Israel assembled in the city of Hebron in order to crown David the king; and they spoke saying: "Behold we are of thy bone and thy flesh. In times past when Saul was king over us, it was thou that ledest us out and broughtest us in, to Israel. The Lord has said to thee: 'Thou shalt feed my people Israel and thou shalt be Prince over Israel.'"

Then a covenant was made between David and the elders, and they anointed David king over Israel. He was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. This is usually looked upon as the important time in the whole history of the Children of Israel. It was at this period that they became a great kingdom; so that ever afterward whenever the Children of Israel talked of the glories of the past and wished to name the time when their people had been the most prosperous, they used to look back and talk about the days when their people were ruled over by King David.

I will tell you some other things which were done by David during his reign. In the first place let me give you a short account of what he did because of his memory for his dear Jonathan. I like this very much

in David. It shows that when he became a man of great power he did not forget those sweet and tender memories of his younger days.

As we are told: David said, "Is there yet anybody left to the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" And there was one of the house of Saul, a servant whose name was Ziba, and they called him unto David, and the king said unto him, "Art thou Ziba?" And the man said: "Thy servant is he." And David said: "Is there not yet any of the house of Saul that I may show kindness unto him?" And Ziba said unto the king: "Jonathan has yet a son who is lame on his feet."

It seems that at the time when Saul and Jonathan were killed, there had been a little boy only five years old, a son of Jonathan, in charge of a nurse; and when the nurse heard how the boy's father and grandfather had been killed, she was afraid that the little boy would be killed also, and she took the child and fled, and in her haste he slipped out of her arms and fell, and so was hurt and made lame for all the rest of his life.

And this is the one whom the man had in mind when he answered David: "Jonathan hath yet a son who is lame on his feet." And the king said unto the man, "Where is he?" And Ziba said unto the king: "Behold, he is in the house of Machir and his name is Mephibosheth."

And Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan came unto David and bowed before him. And David said: "Mephibosheth." And he answered and said, "Behold thy servant." And David said: "Fear not, for I shall show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and restore thee all the land belonging to thy grandfather Saul, and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually." Then the king called Ziba and said unto him: "All that belonged to Saul have I given unto thy master's son and thou shalt till the land for him, thou and thy sons and thy servants; and thou shalt bring in the fruits that thy master's son may have bread to eat; but Mephistosheth shall eat bread always at my table."

Now as to what David did for Israel. I am quite sure that you have heard of a great city far away over in Palestine, a city which has been more talked about than any other city in the world. We are speaking of Jerusalem. In the early days of David this had been a small city belonging to one of the tribes of Canaan. But that tribe had made war on David, and so David conquered them and captured their city. Then he went to live there and made it the capital of his kingdom. In this way it became the great city of Palestine. He made a much larger city of it, and, I suppose, built another great wall around it. It was surrounded, as you know, by hills and mountains, and was entered by gates from the valleys below. David had armies of soldiers with him to defend the city and the Children of Israel came to look upon it as the great city of the land.

Then in the next place David took pains to show his honor for the great Ruler of the World. You remember about the Ark which had been made at the time when Moses and Aaron were with the Children of Israel in the Wilderness. This Ark, it seems, had been kept in a tent; and so David went forth with a great number of people, and they brought this Ark to Jerusalem in order to do honor to the Lord over All.

Unfortunately, David had to be all the while going to war. He had made up his mind now once for all to conquer the whole of Canaan, and put an end to the troubles between the Israelites and the Canaanites. These wars had been going on ever since the days of Joshua. But David had founded his kingdom and so he set to work to conquer these tribes one after another.

There was one thing, however, that he wanted very much to do. He wished to build a temple to the Lord. He had made a great palace for himself, where he and his family lived in Jerusalem; and he did not feel it right that he should live in such a palace when there was no temple for the Ruler over All. And he said to Nathan, the great teacher of those days, who was called a prophet: "See now, I dwell in a house

of cedar, but the Ark of the Lord dwelleth within curtains." And Nathan was going to tell David to proceed and build a temple; but the Lord said to Nathan, as we are told: "Now therefore thus shalt thou say unto my servant David, 'Thus saith the Lord: I took thee from the pasture and from following the sheep that thou shouldst be prince over my people, Israel, and I have been with thee whithersoever thou wentest and have cut off all thy enemies from before thee; and I will make thee a great name like unto the name of the great ones that are in the earth. When thy days be fulfilled and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy family after thee and one of them shall build a house to my name. I will be his father and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the stripes of the children of men; but my mercy shall not depart from him.'"

You will wonder why it was that David was not allowed to build this temple, and I will tell you. It was because David had been, as we are told, a "man of blood." He had been a great soldier and been obliged to kill many people. This had to be done, as there was no other way at that time by which the wicked Canaanite could be conquered and punished. But it was felt that the Temple to the Lord over All should be built by a man who had not been compelled to take the lives of his fellow men; and so this wish on the part of David could not be granted. He was able to advance and make a great people of the Children of Israel, and also a great name for himself, but he was not allowed to build a temple to the Lord.

TO THE TEACHER: As there are a number of incidents in this lesson, each one should be taken up separately. There should be some talk about Jerusalem and of its importance, perhaps with pictures of the city and of its surroundings. The reason why David was refused the privilege of building the Temple should be discussed and remembered. The two Mourning Songs might be committed to memory and recited in the class.

CHAPTER XLVII.

How David Did Wrong.

You must now learn something about David which we should like to leave out, if it were right for us to do so. I am quite sure you will think there is a great deal of wickedness in these stories from the Bible; but it is a sad fact that you must know of once for all, that there has been much wickedness in the world; and the worst of it is, even great men have a way sometimes of yielding to temptation. This may happen again and again when a man comes into great power and is more free to do quite as he pleases. There is nothing in the world more dangerous than for a man for a long while to be able to do quite as he pleases. It makes him forget to obey rules or keep commands. And this is just what happened to David as it did to Saul. At one time he was guilty of an awful crime. He must have been sorry for it all the rest of his days; but I shall have to tell you about it.

It goes with that custom of early times which we have outgrown now, by which a man could have more than one wife, especially if he were a king. And it so happened that David was walking one evening upon the roof of his house, and he looked in a certain way and saw a woman in another dwelling. And the woman was very beautiful to look upon; and all of a sudden the thought came to David that he would like to have her for his wife. And David sent and inquired about the woman, and some one said to him, "This is Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, the Hittite."

Now when this was told to David he ought at once to have put the whole subject out of his mind; he

should not have allowed himself to think about it for a single minute. It was an awful crime for him to take another man's wife.

In his younger days when David was a brave modest shepherd lad, or when he was fleeing from the persecution of Saul and protected by the kindness and love of Jonathan, I am sure that if this temptation had come to him he would have put it away at once and never have thought of it again. But he had been king now for some time and able to command people to do his wishes in all sorts of ways, so that he was no longer in the habit of giving up. He made up his mind, therefore, that he would have Bathsheba for his wife in spite of Uriah, the Hittite.

And the way he went about it is something awful to think of. When a man makes up his mind to do something terribly wicked and knows how wicked it is, he is liable to forget all scruples and lose every sense of shame. But I must let you know once for all how guilty David was. According to my story: It came to pass that David wrote a letter to Joab, the leader of his army, who was out at war with one of the tribes in Canaan, and he wrote in the letter saying: "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle and retire from him that he may be smitten and die." And it came to pass that Joab assigned Uriah to the place where he knew the valiant men were, and there fell some of the people even of the servants of David, and Uriah the Hittite died also.

Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war and how Uriah the Hittite was dead. And the messenger came and said unto David: "The men prevailed against us and came out against us into the field and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate; and the shooters shot thy servants from out the wall and some of the king's servants be dead and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also."

One would have supposed that this would have frightened David when he was told what an awful thing had been done. But he had gone so far now that he seemed to have lost his conscience. Then David

said unto the messenger: "Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, 'Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword debaseth one as well as another,' make thy battle more strong between the city and overthrow it."

I should not like to have looked into David's heart at this time. It must have been just like a stone, no feeling there at all. He did not have heart enough even to be ashamed. He had taken Bathsheba to be his wife after having caused the death of her husband Uriah.

Yet after what I have told you about David, you will feel pretty sure that his conscience would come back to him by and by. This was the same David who had kept his father's sheep, and who in his great self-reliance had gone out and killed Goliath. It was the same David whom Jonathan had loved and who had loved Jonathan. It was the same David who had returned good for evil to Saul, and spared Saul's life when he might have killed him. It was only a question of time when that heart of stone would melt, and he would fall to the ground and wish so much he had never been guilty of that awful crime. I will tell you now, how his conscience was awakened about it all.

It was known to Nathan the teacher or prophet in Jerusalem, what David had done. And Nathan came one day to David and told him a story. And it was this: "There were two men in one city; the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and his children; it did eat of his morsel and drank of his own cup, and it lay in his bosom, and it was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveler unto the rich man, and the rich man spared to take of his own flock and own herd to dress for the traveler that was come unto him, but took the poor man's lamb and dressed it for the traveler."

As Nathan came to this point in his story, there was complete silence for a while. A pained look came over the face of David, the heart of stone began to

melt in pity for that poor man and his one ewe lamb. As he thought of that wicked act on the part of the rich man, David's anger was greatly kindled and he said to Nathan: "The man that hath done this is worthy to die; and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."

Again there was silence. Nathan was watching the face of David, thinking what he should say. And as the two men stood looking at each other, Nathan said softly but solemnly to David: "Thou art the man." Fancy the change that must have come over the king's face. His heart had already melted in pity for that poor man, and all the conscience within him had come back. He turned pale and felt sick in his very soul as Nathan went on to say, "Thus saith the Lord: 'I anointed thee king over Israel and delivered thee out of the hands of Saul.' Wherefore hast thou despised the word of the Lord to do evil in his sight? Thou hast smitten Uriah the Hittite with the sword and taken his wife to be thy wife. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thy house."

And David broke down completely; no courage was left in him at all, he just wept like a child as he cried: "I have sinned, I have sinned." That was all he could say. No mortal ever felt greater sorrow than David felt for what he had done. He had taken the one ewe lamb of another. He had stolen the wife of one who had served him as a brave soldier in the war, and caused that man to be put to death. And he knew that the shame of it would hang over his life and over his name all through future times. Whenever the story of David would be told, this awful deed would have to be told with it.

It is said that David wrote a psalm or hymn of penitence for this crime, and it was a sad confession:

"Have mercy upon me, O Lord, according to thy loving kindness. According to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. I acknowledge my transgression and my sin is

ever before me. Hide thy face from my sin and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a clean heart, O Lord, and renew a right spirit within me."

You see in this hymn of David how a man feels when he has done wrong. Somehow it is to him as if he were not clean, or as if he wanted to be washed in some way with pure water; he wants a clean heart. And David felt just this way. He fairly hated himself and did not feel himself worthy to live. He wanted to be made all over again. It could not be as if that deed had never been done. But I am sure after what Nathan the prophet had said to him, and after he had heard those awful words spoken to him, "Thou art the man," that he never lost control of himself in the same way again. But the shame in his heart was there and it had to stay with him there all the rest of his days.

TO THE TEACHER: It is a difficult matter to tell this story and make it effective in the right way. We naturally feel that one who had been a really good man never could have been guilty of such an awful crime. But the story belongs to the whole narrative and must be given. On the other hand, there is great power and beauty in the parable by Nathan. The Hymn of Penitence should be committed to memory and recited in the class. There is some danger of exaggerating the high character of David, in fear lest from later reading the young people may feel that they have experienced a disillusion. From the stories we have of this man, the good and bad elements were mixed up in a most extraordinary way.

MEMORY VERSE: *I acknowledge my transgression and my sin is ever before me. Hide thy face from my sin and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me.*

CHAPTER XLVIII.

David and His Son Absalom.

We now come, alas ! to something very painful which happened to David in the course of his reign of forty years. It was after he was settled in Jerusalem and his children were growing up around him, when he had become very successful in overcoming the enemies of the Israelites and founding his kingdom in the land of Canaan. My story is concerned with an effort on the part of a number of the Children of Israel to drive David out of his place as king, and to put another man on the throne. This must have been very hard indeed for David, when he had done so much for the Israelites. It was what we would call a "conspiracy" against the king. David had been compelled to make a good many enemies even among the Children of Israel. He could not let them have their own way all the time, and every now and then had to punish them for disobedience. Hence there were a good many of the people who disliked or hated him.

But I have not yet spoken of the saddest and most painful part of this experience to David. It seems that he was extremely fond of one of his sons, whose name was Absalom. He loved this boy more even than himself. Just why he was so fond of Absalom, I do not know. It may be that this boy was dearer to him than all his other children. And now just think what took place. It was this son who took the lead in the conspiracy in order to set himself up as king in place of his father David.

As we are told: Now in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty. From the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. And he was said

to have had most beautiful hair, which all the people admired. It may be that this was one reason why they thought so much of Absalom, because he was such a handsome man.

But at any rate this son set about to make himself "popular," as we should say, with the Israelites, and to make all the people like him. He was scheming in order to win over the hearts of the people so that he might become king by and by.

As my story runs: It came to pass that Absalom prepared him a chariot and horses and fifty men to run before him. And Absalom rose up early and stood beside the gate, and it was so when any man had a suit which should come to the king for judgment then Absalom called unto him and said: "O that I were made judge in the land that every man which hath any suit or cause, might come unto me and I would do him justice." And it was so that when any man came nigh to bow to him, he would put forth his hand and take hold of him and kiss him. And so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

I do not suppose that David suspected what was going on, because he had so much trust in his boy. When we love a person we very naturally put great confidence in him, and it never crosses our minds that he could plan to do us harm. So it never entered David's mind that Absalom could be planning anything wicked in trying to get the friendship of the people for himself. It only made him still more fond of Absalom.

Yet the blow had to come at last. Absalom had everything ready in order to carry out his conspiracy. He said unto his father the king: "I pray thee let me go and pay a vow which I have made in Hebron." And the king said unto him: "Go in peace." So Absalom arose and went to Hebron. But in the meantime he sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying: "As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then shall ye say, 'Absalom is king in Hebron.'"

But when all this had taken place according to the plans of the conspiracy, there came a messenger to

David saying: "The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom." Then it was told David how his son was coming with an army to attack him and overthrow him. Just fancy what a blow this was to the king! It was bad enough to feel that the Israelites, many of them, for whom he had done so much, were rising against him and becoming his enemies; but worst of all, his own dear son whom he had loved so much had gone against him, and was trying to bring war upon his own father. One must feel pity for poor David after what he had done in founding the kingdom of Israel, and after what he had done for his boy Absalom. If there is anything that breaks a man's heart it is to meet with glaring ingratitude.

David was now obliged for a time to flee from his own city in Jerusalem. And as he went up among the mountains and was passing beyond, there came a man who began to curse him. This may have been the first real experience David had had with the conspiracy, giving him an idea of all that was being done against him. And one of his soldiers said: "Why should this man be allowed to curse my lord the king? Let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head." But David was too sad to allow this. Now that his own dearest son had turned against him, he hardly seemed to care about what was taking place. And he answered: "Behold my son, my own child seeketh my life! Why, then, should not this other man do the same? Let him alone and let him curse."

But he had to raise an army and at once see that this wicked conspiracy should be put down. It pained him extremely that he should have to go to war with his own boy Absalom. There was nothing else, however, to be done. And David sent forth the army saying to the leaders: "Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom"; and all the people heard when the king gave the captains charge concerning Absalom. So the army went forth to battle and the battle was in the forest of Ephraim, and the army which had risen up against David was defeated and there was a slaughter there that day of twenty thousand men.

You would like to know what happened to Absalom. He had to flee as his army was defeated. And Absalom rode upon a mule and the mule went under the thick bows of a great oak tree, and his hair caught hold of the oak and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth, while the mule that was under him went on.

There was Absalom hanging by his hair from the boughs of a tree. He had thought a great deal of this beautiful hair and had admired himself for it and taken a great deal of care to dress it and make it look more beautiful, so that people should be saying all the time to each other, "What handsome hair Absalom has!" and now this hair was the cause of his capture and death.

It seems, a man of the armies of David saw Absalom hanging there, and told Joab and said: "Behold I saw Absalom hanging in an oak." And Joab said unto the man that told him: "Behold thou sawest it and why dost thou not smite him there to the ground, and I would have given thee ten pieces of silver and a girdle." And the man said unto Joab: "Though I should receive a thousand pieces of silver in my hand, yet would I not put forth my hand against the king's son; for in our hearing the king charged saying, 'Beware that none touch the young man Absalom.'"

Then Joab took three darts in his hand and went and thrust them through the heart of Absalom while Absalom was yet alive hanging by his hair from the oak tree. And the young men that carried Joab's armor compassed about and smote Absalom and slew him. And Joab blew the trumpet and the army returned from fighting, and they took Absalom and cast his body into a great pit in the forest and raised over him a very great heap of stones.

As yet David had not been told of what had happened to his son. And Joab said unto a man who was a Cushite: "Go tell the king what thou hast already seen." And the Cushite bowed himself unto Joab and ran.

Now David sat between the gates of the city and

the watchman went up to the roof of the gate under the walls and lifted up his eyes and beheld a man running alone. And the watchman cried and told the king. And the king said: "If he be alone, there is tidings in his mouth."

And when the messenger had arrived the first words said to him by David were: "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" And the Cushite said: "Tidings for my lord the king; the enemies of my lord the king and all that rose up against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is!" By this speech the king knew that Absalom was dead. And David was much moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And as he wept thus he said: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom; would that I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son."

And it was told Joab: "Behold the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom." And the victory that day was turned into mourning unto all the people; for the people heard say that day, "The king grieveth for his son." And the king covered his face and cried with a loud voice: "O my son Absalom, O Absalom my son, my son."

And after this, David returned to Jerusalem and had peace in his kingdom, and he continued ruling over the Children of Israel.

TO THE TEACHER: Point out the appalling guilt of Absalom in conspiring against his own father. The weakness of this man can also be observed in his vanity on account of his beautiful hair. Speak of this with contempt.

CHAPTER XLIX.

Solomon Becomes King. The Death of David.

David had become an old man and was about to die. He had decided that he would make his son Solomon to be his successor as king over Israel. They brought the mother of Solomon to the aged king and he said to her: "Verily as I promised unto thee, saying, 'Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me and sit upon my throne in my stead:' verily so will I do this day." Then Solomon's mother bowed with her face to the earth; and king David said further: "Call me Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet." And the king said unto them: "Take with you servants and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon and let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him then king over Israel; and blow ye with the trumpets and say, 'The Lord save King Solomon'; then he shall come and sit upon my throne, for he shall be king in my stead. I have appointed him to be prince over Israel."

So Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet went down and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon; and Zadok the priest took the horn of oil and anointed Solomon; and they blew the trumpet and all the people said, "The Lord save King Solomon," and all the people came up after him and the people piped with pipes and rejoiced with great joy, and so that the earth rent with the sound of them.

Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die and he called his son Solomon to his bedside for his last words. And he said to Solomon: "*I go the way of all the earth, be thou strong, therefore, and show thyself a man;* and keep the charge of the Lord to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes and com-

mandments, according to that which is written in the law of Moses." And David slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David, which was Jerusalem.

You will care to hear about the reign of Solomon because it was one of the most famous reigns in the world's history. A good deal of the time when David was king, he had been obliged to go out and carry on war with the enemies of the Israelites. But now for the most part there was peace; hence Solomon was able to devote his time to improving the conditions among the people. He wanted to have the Israelites prosperous as well as happy, and according to all accounts there was much prosperity among the Israelites a great deal of the time of the reign of Solomon. I am not sure that all this good fortune was the best thing in the world for the Israelites, because when people are too successful and have too much money and grow very rich, they sometimes forget other things and do not remember that money or riches are not the only good things in the world. But be this as it may, there was great prosperity among the Israelites at this time. You will hear again and again when you grow up about the wonderful reign of Solomon.

What do you suppose was the first thing that Solomon was anxious to do? "Why," you say, "it would be to build that temple to the Lord over All." Of course, you remember it had been promised to David that after his death, his son, who should sit on the throne, might be allowed to build that temple.

Now it seems that not far away from the kingdom of Israel there was another king by the name of Hiram, who ruled over Tyre. And as we are told, Hiram the king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father, and Hiram was ever a lover of David. And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying: "Thou knowest how that David my father could not build a house to the Lord, but now the Lord hath given me rest on every side, and behold I purpose to build a temple for the Lord. Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon, and my servants

shall be with thy servants; and I will give thee hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt say; for thou knowest that there is not among us any that have skill to hew timber like unto thy people."

And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying: "I have heard the message that thou hast sent unto me: I will do all thy desire concerning the timber of cedar and concerning the timber of fir; my servants shall bring them down to Lebanon by the sea, and I will make them into rafts to go by sea unto the place that thou shalt appoint me." And so Hiram gave Solomon timber of cedar and timber of fir according to all his desire.

And Solomon commanded that they hew out great stones, costly stones to lay the foundations of the house with wrought stone. And the house when it was building was built of stone made ready at the quarry, and there was neither hammer nor ax, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was building. And thus he built the house and finished it; and he covered the house with beams and planks of cedar.

And Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold, and the whole house he overlaid with gold until all the house was finished, also the whole altar he overlaid with gold. And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures and palm trees and open flowers within and without. And the floor of the house he overlaid with gold, within and without. Solomon was thirteen years building this wonderful temple.

After the temple was finished and all was ready, then Solomon called the people together from all over Canaan, to come and behold it. The people had a great ceremony of "Dedication," as we should call it. You can be sure that they were immensely pleased with the beautiful temple; but there was one thing which we are assured was said by Solomon at this time and which I should like to have you remember. He knew that the people would feel that the Lord over All lived just in this temple and nowhere else. He wanted to warn them against such a belief; and the

people therefore heard Solomon say: "Will the Lord in very deed dwell on the earth? Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee! How much less this house that I have builded?"

And Solomon spoke to the Great Ruler saying: "Blessed be the Lord that hath given rest unto his people Israel according to all that he promised. There has not failed one word of all his good promise which he promised by the hand of Moses. The Lord be with us as he was with our fathers. Let him not leave us or forsake us, that he may incline our hearts unto him to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments which he commanded our fathers."

You can have little idea of the great wealth, as we are told, that was possessed by Solomon. He had so much gold that he did not care for mere silver, which we should also value very much nowadays. He set about to build himself a great palace, and this too was built of costly stones, and cedar wood, and overlaid with gold. Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory and overlaid it with the finest gold. There were six steps to the throne, and the images of twelve lions stood on the one side and upon the other upon the six steps. There was not the like made in any kingdom. And all of king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold. None were of silver. And so king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom, and all the earth sought the presence of Solomon, and they brought every man his present, vessels of silver and vessels of gold, and raiment and armor and spices, horses, and mules. And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen.

TO THE TEACHER: Dwell upon the death bed of David and his charge to Solomon. Admit frankly that the old man had been anything but a perfect character, and that he had failed sadly in being true to the charge he now gave his son. One might point out that this may have been the very reason why he gave

the message so urgently to his son. Then talk over the building of the temple and discuss some of the details. Emphasize especially the speech of Solomon.

MEMORY VERSES: *Now I go the way of all the earth; be thou strong, therefore, and show thyself a man,*

Will the Lord in very deed dwell on the earth? Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded.

CHAPTER L.

The Wisdom of Solomon and the Close of the First Kingdom.

I have not yet told you what interests us most of all about the great king Solomon. It seems that he had something else besides riches. The king had gone quite early in his reign to a place called Gibeon in order to make an offering there to the Great Ruler. And the Lord had said to Solomon: "Ask what I shall give thee." Now this was a great chance for the king. He knew that he might have the one thing that he should ask for. He must have thought a great deal about it and turned over in his mind what he would most like to have. I wonder if you can guess what it was. But this is what he said in reply: "Now, O Lord, thou hast made thy servant king, instead of David my father; and I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in, and thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give thy servant, therefore, an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil." You see what had been the choice of Solomon. Instead of asking for riches or honor or great power or beauty, he had asked most of all for wisdom. And this pleased the Ruler of the World very much.

The Lord over All said to Solomon: "Because thou hast asked this thing and hast not asked for thyself a long life, neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself understanding or wisdom, behold I have done according to thy word; lo, I have given thee a wise and understanding heart, so that there hast been none like thee before, neither after thee shall arise any like unto thee; and I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor, so

that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee."

As I have explained, all this, according to my story, afterwards came to pass with Solomon. He had great wealth, but most of all he is said to have had great wisdom. You may like to hear a story showing how he made use of this wisdom, in knowing how to decide in grave disputes among the people. At one time there came to him two women who were mothers, and the one woman said: "O lord I and this woman dwell in one house, and I had a little child within the house; and it came to pass three days after that, a little child was born to this one also, and we were together, and there was no stranger with us in the house. And this woman's child died in the night, and she arose at midnight and took my son from beside me while I was asleep and laid him in her bosom, and laid the dead child in my bosom, and when I arose in the morning, behold the child in my arms was dead; but when I looked at it, it was not my son."

Then the other woman said: "Nay, but the living is my son, and the dead one thy son." And the first one said again: "Nay, but the dead one is thy son, and the living mine." Thus they spoke before the king.

And now you will see how wise Solomon was in the way he set about to find out to which mother the living child belonged. He told some one standing by, saying: "Fetch me a sword." And they brought a sword before the king, and the king said: "Divide the living child in two and give half to the one and half to the other." Then the woman to whom the living child really belonged, cried out: "O my lord, give her the child and in no wise slay it." But the other woman said: "It shall be neither thine nor mine; divide it."

This settled it for king Solomon. He knew at once that if this second woman had been the real mother, she would have far rather had her child given to another than to have her child cut in pieces by the sword. Of course he had no intention of doing such a cruel thing. And so the king answered and said to the

woman who had cried out not to have the child slain: "Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it; she is the mother thereof." In this way all Israel heard more and more of the wisdom of Solomon.

People began to come from all over the world in order to see the king, to talk with him, to ask him questions, and to find out about his great wisdom. We are told, for instance, how the great queen of Sheba heard of the wisdom of Solomon and how she came to test him with hard questions. She arrived at Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and with very much gold and precious stones. When she was come to Solomon, she told him all that was in her heart, and Solomon answered all her questions.

And as we are told, when the Queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon and the house that he had built and the meat of his table and the sitting of his servants and the attendance of his ministers and their apparel and their cup-bearers; there was no more spirit in her. And she said to the king, "It was a true report that I heard in my own land, of thine acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit, I believed not the words until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and behold the half was not told me. Thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I have heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee and that hear thy wisdom." And she gave the king a great present of gold, and of spices a very great store, and precious stones; there came no more such abundance of spices as those which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon. Then she turned and went back to her own land, she and her servants.

It is time that I should bring my stories to an end.

We might go on telling you a great deal more, for the history of the Children of Israel went on for hundreds of years. I could describe how after the death of Solomon the Children of Israel began to quarrel and have strife with one another, and how at last owing to all this strife the kingdom was divided into two parts,

so that one part, consisting of two tribes, had its own king at Jerusalem and was called the Kingdom of Judah; while the other part formed a kingdom of ten tribes called the Kingdom of Israel. I could explain how, later on, they had great wars with the Egyptians on the one side and with the Assyrians and Babylonians on the other side; and how great armies at last overran their country, capturing Jerusalem and carrying the Israelites off as captives far away to the city of Babylon.

It was at this time that a number of their great teachers arose and gave them new thoughts, newer and higher ideas about right and wrong, new and better thoughts about the great Ruler of the World; and these teachers were called the prophets of Israel. I could tell you again how at last the captive Children of Israel were allowed to come back to the land of Canaan and once more to have their home in their great city of Jerusalem; but how, on the other hand, during this time the ten tribes, who had formed the kingdom of Israel, had become lost altogether, so that after that time we hear only of the two tribes whose kingdom centered around Jerusalem. Some time in the future when you are older, you will want to read all about this, and hear more of that wonderful history and what took place later on in the city of Jerusalem. But I have told you enough for the present and will end my story here with the reign of Solomon.

TO THE TEACHER: The circumstances concerning the wisdom of Solomon are classic, and therefore must be carefully remembered. At this point there should be a review of all the stories, especially of the reigns of Saul, David and Solomon; and then, also, a review of the entire series of stories, being sure that the children remember the names and incidents in the order in which they come. There might also be a complete review of all the Memory Verses.

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